NO PROFIT FOR BALLOON BOY PARENTS, PG10

Local pg 4

End-of-year Q&A with Mayor Peter Kelly



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Police still nabbing drunk drivers

WARNING Despite repeated warnings, Halifax Regional Police say they are still catching dozens of people drunk behind the wheel as the holiday party season rages on in HRM.

In a release issued Wednesday, police said they had charged a total of 61 people in its jurisdiction with impaired driving since Nov. 26. Three 24-hour suspensions have also been issued, said the release.

Police have been conducting check points throughout HRM as part of Operation Christmas, a program aimed at preventing the spike in serious accidents that occurs every year during the holiday season.

According to police, the checkpoints will continue through into the new year. METRO HALIFAX

News on the Move

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Happy Holidays

Metro will resume publishing Monday, Jan. 4.

Holiday Guide pg 21

Five pages of last-minute gift ideas

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Fire devastates family



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

A firefighter walks near a burnt-out back window of a Cowie Hill townhouse early Wednesday morning. A family of five managed to escape from the blaze however their dog was killed in the fire.

Cowie Hill clan loses home, dog just before Christmas

Help pouring in for victims

PHILIP CROUCHER
philip.croucher@metronews.ca

A family of five is trying to pick up the pieces this holiday season after fire destroyed their home early Wednesday morning.

The couple and three daughters escaped injury as fire heavily damaged their rental townhouse at 19 Shepherd Rd., which is located in Cowie Hill.

"You always see it on the news — a family losing their house this time of year," the father, Joe Keizer, told Metro at the scene. "This time it happened to us"

Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Service spokesman Capt. Dave Meldrum said they were called to the blaze at 4:47 a.m. and "encountered heavy fire on both the ground and upper level of the end unit."

Fire was also extending out the roof, but Meldrum said within 40 minutes firefighters were able to get the blaze mostly extinguished. They also stopped the fire from seriously damaging the vacant house that adjoined it. The cause hasn't been determined. A handful of nearby homes were evacuated as a precaution.

"They did a great job getting in there quickly," Meldrum said of firefighters. "The good news is the family had already left the structure. They were outside when we arrived."

> **"This is the worst time. But now we move forward, I guess. That's all we can do."**
> Joe Keizer, father

Keizer said his oldest daughter, 13-year-old Myranda, first noticed the flames and yelled "fire" from her first-floor bedroom. She then ran and woke everyone up.

"I saw the fire and they ran out," Keizer said. "I tried to put a blanket over it because it wasn't huge at the time. The blanket didn't work so I ran out."

The family then called for its three-year-old dog Coco, but to no avail.

"I tried to go back in and at that time, everything was just in flames in a matter of seconds," he recalled. "It was full of smoke. I took one breath and I couldn't breathe anymore. So I ran out the door and the flames chased me out the door, right over my head."

Police said the dog did die in the fire. Keizer said they also "lost absolutely everything" inside, including Christmas gifts bought for their daughters — Myranda, nine-year-old Alexis and four-year-old Lacey.

"This is the worst time," said Keizer, who doesn't have rental insurance. "But now we move forward, I guess," he then added. "That's all we can do."

WITH FILES FROM RYAN TAPLIN

PHILIP CROUCHER
philip.croucher@metronews.ca

BLAZE Offers of donations have begun pouring in for the Cowie Hill family who lost their home by fire early Wednesday morning.

The Salvation Army Family Resource Centre in Spryfield is main base for those looking to assist. Lieut. Rob Jeffery, a pastor at the resource centre, said calls of help started coming in soon after the fire happened and continued throughout the day.

"Most are just offers of help right now," Jeffery said. "It's been both companies and individuals."

Jeffrey said they were accepting offers of donations all day Wednesday, and will do so again on Monday. The Sobey's in Spryfield is also accepting monetary donations, with CTV reporting last night they gave the family a $500 gift certificate for food as well.

After the fire happened, the Canadian Red Cross immediately came to the scene to provide the family with emergency accommodations and food, along with replacement clothing, blankets and personal care items.

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Local



Grit slams Tories over lobster fishing

Halifax West MP Geoff Regan is criticizing the federal Conservative government for what he deems the "neglect and mismanagement" of the lobster fishing industry. The Liberal MP said the government isn't doing enough to help those in the lobster fishery, which he described as being in a crisis. He said the current program offered by the government "eliminates 80 per cent of the fishermen and bases compensation on 2008 landings of other species." He said that needs to be changed. METRO HALIFAX

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Charges laid in west-end shooting

Police arrest two males despite lack of co-operation from victim

PHILIP CROUCHER
philip.croucher@metronews.ca

Two men are facing charges including attempted murder in relation to a shooting in west-end Halifax Tuesday afternoon.

Jermaine Beals, 25, and Alexander Downey, 28, were arrested on Owen Drive in Dartmouth around midnight yesterday, about 11 hours after a 23-year-old man was shot in the face inside the Bayers Park Apartments at 6969 Bayers Rd.

Police spokesman Const. Brian Palmeter said Wednesday the victim still isn't co-operating with them, but they were able to make the arrests based on evidence found at the scene.

"Through the course of the investigation, we were able to retrieve evidence to allow for the suspects to be identified," Palmeter said. "I can't get into specifics about it, but basically it was solely on the efforts of the officers involved."



PHILIP CROUCHER/METRO HALIFAX

Halifax Regional Police walk out of the Petro Canada on Bayers Road Tuesday afternoon. A man who suffered a gun shot wound minutes earlier walked to the station to have someone call police.

A day in court

- Jermaine Beals and Alexander Downey, both of Dartmouth, made a brief appearance Wednesday in Halifax Provincial Court. They're each facing charges of attempted murder and weapons-related offences. The case has been held over until Thursday for a show cause hearing. Both were remanded to the Burnside jail.
- Beals is no stranger to the court system. In February, 2007 Beals was sentenced to 28 months in prison for aggravated assault. Three years earlier, he was handed a $300 fine for assaulting a peace officer.

Police were called to the nearby Petro Canada on Bayers Road at 1:32 p.m. Tuesday after the victim went inside the store and told staff he had been shot.

Police believe the shooting took place minutes earlier at the apartment complex behind the gas station.

Palmeter said the victim suffered an "apparent single gunshot wound" in a common area inside the multi-level complex.

Palmeter would only say the victim's injuries were non-life threatening.

But Fairview resident Brian Clark told Metro he saw a man with a cut on his face walking in the opposite direction towards the gas station.

"When I looked at him I thought it was just a cut on the side of his face. He must have gotten winged or something (by the bullet)," Clark said, adding blood was coming down his shirt.

Palmeter said the victim is known to them and this wasn't a random act. He said police have yet to determine a motive.

H1N1 cases decreasing in N.S.

Flu Outbreak

ILLNESS Nova Scotia continued to see a steady decrease in H1N1 activity across the province last week.

The Department of Health Promotion and Protection reported Wednesday there were no new hospitalizations due to H1N1 and no new lab-confirmed cases of the virus reported between Dec. 13 and 19.

As of Saturday, the province had distributed enough vaccine to immunize 63 per cent of the population, or about 590,000 people. In anticipation of a possible third wave of the H1N1 pandemic in the new year, officials are still encouraging people to get vaccinated if they haven't already done so.

METRO HALIFAX

Pre-trial date set for woman in multi-vehicle Cole Harbour crash

MONIQUE MUISE
monique.muise@metronews.ca

A pre-trial date has been set in the case of a Cole Harbour woman charged in connection with a fatal car accident last summer.

Beverlee Russell, 54, was not present at Wednesday's scheduled appearance. Her lawyer, Pat Atherton, spoke on her behalf and agreed to a date of Feb. 19 for a pre-trial hearing, which will narrow down the issues and the list of witnesses in the case before a formal trial date is set.

Russell is facing multiple charges, including manslaughter, in connection with two separate accidents on Aug. 3 in Cole Harbour.

She allegedly drove away from the scene of the first collision before causing a second, multi-vehicle crash that claimed the life of 57-year-old retired teacher Gary Pfinder and seriously injured two others.

Police allege alcohol was a factor in both accidents.

Russell was arrested and charged on Aug. 10.

The next day, a judge ordered her to undergo a psychiatric assessment to determine if she is mentally fit to stand trial. It was determined she was, and she has since been released on recognizance with conditions.



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Beverlee Russell, 54, in this file photo from her first court appearance back in August.

Atlantic Vision ferry back in the water

REPAIR Marine Atlantic said the ferry Atlantic Vision returned to service Wednesday after the completion of repairs to a hole in the stern.

The vessel was about to tie up in Port aux Basques, N.L., on Tuesday when strong winds pushed it into the dock. The bump tore a hole in the stern about five metres above the water line and scraped the tail fin.

There were no injuries.

Marine Atlantic said the ferry would be returning to full service Wednesday when it makes a crossing from Newfoundland to North Sydney.

Meanwhile, the ferry Leif Ericson will remain in service at least until Thursday to clear any backlog in drop trailer traffic.

METRO HALIFAX

News in brief

ACCIDENT A 22-year-old woman was taken to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries after Halifax Regional Police say she was struck by a car on Barrington Street at Green Road. The 49-year-old male driver was issued a ticket for failing to yield to a pedestrian in a crosswalk.

METRO HALIFAX

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WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan gather for Christmas dinner far from home at **metronews.ca/canada**

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East Coast Music Awards, Festival and Conference tickets available

Tickets for the 2010 East Coast Music Awards, Festival and Conference taking place March 4 to 7 in Sydney are now on sale. Tickets are being sold through Ticket-Pro and Reservatech (ticketpro.ca and reservatech.net) as well as in person at Centre 200 and the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre. **CAPE BRETON POST**

Mayor looks back at years of highs, lows

Peter Kelly discusses HRM's progress after almost a decade as city's top politician

MONIQUE MUISE
monique.muise@metronews.ca

It's been nearly 10 years since Peter Kelly first sat down behind the mayor's desk in HRM. Three municipal elections, two devastating storms, billions of dollars in infrastructure investment and one gigantic sewage debacle later, the man many have described as an incurable workaholic is still strolling into city hall each day and pouring himself a steaming cup of green tea.

As the 2000s draw to a close, Metro sat down with the mayor to ask him about HRM's progress, dream concerts on the Common and why our 23 municipal councillors just can't seem to get along.

Answers have been edited for length.

Q You were first elected in 2000, so you've spent almost the entire decade as mayor of HRM. What progress do you feel the municipality has made over the past 10 years?

A Infrastructure. We have four new libraries, six new recreational complexes, five fire halls, new transit routes, three harbour solutions plants, investment in the Alderney Landing complex in Dartmouth ... the list goes on. We've certainly come leaps and bounds from where we were.

Q You started this year off with a rather huge catastrophe at the Halifax sewage-treatment facility. There have been complaints that city hall has not been transparent enough about the flood and ensuing cleanup. How do you respond to that?

A We can't control how things are. For us, it was an event that was a big setback from where we had arrived with the harbour being clean. We admitted that the communication was not as strong as it could have been, or should have been. For that we apologized, and now we've moved on. We now have the Dartmouth plant being commissioned for effluent, the Herring Cove plant is now treating wastewater and the Halifax plant (will be) fully operational by the spring of next year.

Q We had some big names in music take to the stage in Halifax in 2009. If you could organize your dream concert on the Commons, which acts would you include?

A It would have to be U2, in terms of a headliner. I think for my son, it would be Blink-182. For my other son, it would have to be rap — so 50 Cent. And for my father, a vintage act. Maybe Andy Williams?

Q There was a major changeover of power at the provincial level this year, with the NDP elected to a majority government in June. Has this impacted city hall?

A Not at all. We continue to work with the (provincial) government on many fronts and many projects — for example, the new World Trade Centre, which is a $300-million-plus project and is a key piece of infrastructure for the downtown. We have a long way to go, but the elements of co-operation have always been there, and we expect that to be enhanced.

"I have commenced to tweet."
Mayor Peter Kelly, when asked if he's joined Twitter

Q Have you thought about another run at provincial politics yourself?

A I ran back in 1993, and I've been asked (by members of the public) to run for the provincial leadership for the Tories. But at this time, I like this job. I enjoy the challenge, the contact with people.

Q Many HRM councillors are now on Facebook and Twitter — sometimes in the middle of meetings. How do you feel about online social networking?

A I think we have to be moving in that direction. I think there has to be some limitations that one puts on these things, personally. But it's a necessary approach, and it's the way we connect. I think you're going to see it increase more and more.

Q Are you tweeting?

A I have commenced to tweet (laughs). It takes a bit of adjustment, but I'll gradually get better and better.

Q It seems like you're constantly working. When was your last complete day off, and what did you do?

A I moved some furniture for my son last Friday. Normally if you asked me, I probably couldn't remember, but that one I remember just because I had to move furniture. This job puts in 60, 70, 80, even 90 hours a week. It can be (overwhelming), but at the end of the day, you feel accomplished in the things you're able to do.

Q What is the scariest thing you've ever done?

A (Laughs) Probably running for politics. You just don't know the outcome, and you put your heart and soul into the running. And you hope ... but you just don't know if you're going to be successful.

Q There have long been complaints that the bickering between HRM councillors slows the progress at city hall. Do you agree?

A Are we perfect? No, we're not. Sometimes we fail to recognize the need to respect each others' comments, although we may not agree. It's important that everybody focus on the job at hand, which is to serve the public. I learned many, many years ago not to get involved with personalities.

Q What's the biggest challenge facing HRM in 2010?

A The budget, partially. That's part of the discussions with the province as well, in terms up potential downloading and cost pressures moving forward. There's a lot of infrastructure work and projects in the queue, but it's important to keep that momentum up.



Mayor Peter Kelly speaks with Metro Halifax inside his city hall office this week.

RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX



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Man arrested on weapons charges

A 55-year-old Sydney man was arrested Tuesday after Cape Breton Regional Police received a complaint that a man in a car had pointed a weapon at another driver at Highway 125 and Grand Lake Road. Police located the suspect a short time later and arrested the man on weapons offences. CAPE BRETON POST

Mayor hopeful for proposed ferry

PAUL MCLEOD
paul.mcleod@metronews.ca

The mayor of Yarmouth didn't get the early Christmas gift he was hoping for yesterday, but was left with some hope Yarmouth could see a new ferry service.

Mayor Phil Mooney travelled to Halifax with four proposals for Premier Darrell Dexter to keep the Cat running. After the meeting Dexter said he was standing by his decision to deny Bay Ferries a further $6 million to subsidize the Cat.

But there was a small compromise to fast-track a regional transportation study that could lead to a replacement for the Cat. It will be released two months early in January.

"I'm not going to say I'm totally happy because we didn't get our boat for 2010 yet. But the premier was receptive, he listened to what we had to say," Mooney said.

"It's not only Yarmouth, it's all of Nova Scotia this is affecting."

Dexter said the decision was not made lightly and his government considered the impact of the Cat shutting down on the entire province. But he said the ferry has seen a drop off of passengers and with it an "erosion of the economic impact on the province."

Dexter said a new ferry must be self-sustainable and likely must include cargo service.

"What we want to come out of this is a stronger transportation strategy for Southwest Nova," he said. "One that is sustainable, one that does not require the continued subsidization."

Shawn Cummings was one of several Cat employees who travelled to Halifax to show support for the ferry. He said a replacement service would be hurt if the Cat fails now.

"In order to have a long-term solution for sustainable ferry service coming into Nova Scotia, it has to be an uninterrupted service," he said.

"It's going to take many more years and many more millions of dollars to try to get (tourists) back when they've already gone elsewhere for vacation."



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Yarmouth Mayor Phil Mooney speaks with reporters as Premier Darrell Dexter listens following a meeting at One Government Place on Wednesday. Mooney was in Halifax to try to persuade the NDP government to continue subsidizing the Cat ferry.

Yarmouth Progressive Conservative MLA Richard Hurlburt said allowing the Cat to shut down would devastate Southwest Nova and hurt the entire province.

"If we were still in government we would not be here today debating this," he said.

Cumberland County likely still locked out of jail bidding

DEVELOPMENT It's highly unlikely the province is going to reconsider its plan to exclude Cumberland County from bidding on northern Nova Scotia's new jail.

Speaking to reporters in a conference call from Sydney this week, Premier Darrell Dexter reiterated the process being used to select the site of the jail is based on economics and best serving the facility's catchment area — not geography.

"The process is based on finding a central location for that facility," the premier said.

"The decision was made on the basis of what the best value would be for the province."

The county's five municipal leaders and Cumberland South MLA Murray Scott have asked the province to reconsider the exclusion from the bidding process, and have asked for an independent economic impact study.

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Judge tells plaintiff to disclose Facebook usage

A New Brunswick judge has ordered a Miramichi, N.B., woman to reveal how often she uses the social-networking website Facebook to a man she's suing after a 2004 car crash, CBC News Online reported. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Canada



Avalanche survivor one year later

Jeff Adams, left, barely survived being buried beneath waves of snow last December in a thundering series of avalanches that ripped him from his snowmobile and entombed eight of his closest friends. A year later, what haunts him most is the questions he'll one day face from their children. "The biggest thing is those kids ... will never know their dads except for from pictures and stories from friends," said the 30-year-old. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Weather could put a wrench in Games

VANCOUVER 2010 **Games**

VANCOUVER Olympic organizers want a fairytale experience for the 2010 Winter Games, so the weather they need is what Goldilocks wanted from the three bears' porridge.

It can't be too hot, it can't be too cold. It needs to be just right.

"The weather for us has always been one of our major concerns in sport, it obviously affects our field of play and so anything that affects that is always a concern," said Tim Gayda, vice-president of sports for the Vancouver Olympic organizing committee, in a recent interview. "We took the weather into consideration way back even in the bid phase, about how we go about planning where the venues are (and) how we schedule the competitions, so the weather is pretty much at the forefront of our minds from years ago."

Too much huffing and puffing from Mother Nature in 2010 could blow the entire Olympic system down.

Adverse weather that forces the delay of an event impacts staff, volunteers, spectators, security, transportation and of course, the athletes. It could also put a damper on the vision of Vancouver that officials need to help lure tourists back after the Games.

While red mittens might be the appropriate souvenir up in the crisp, snow-capped mountains of Whistler, B.C., the more practical souvenir for Vancouver itself might be the official Olympic umbrella.

On the dates the Games are being held, there's been an average of eight days with no precipitation at all over the last six years.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Delays

- Only a few Winter Olympics have been pulled off with no weather delays at all, the most recent being the Lillehammer Games in 1994.

Nova Scotia **Surfing in December**



ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

A surfer rides a stand up paddle board on waves at Cow Bay, N.S., near Halifax on Wednesday. The Nova Scotia coast attracts a hardcore group of surfers year round.

Jobseekers lose love for Alberta

POPULATION Saddled with dwindling employment and shrinking energy prices, Alberta seems to be losing its status as the promised land for jobseekers from across Canada.

For more than a decade the province's resource-rich economy has drawn in hundreds of thousands of people from Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador and elsewhere.

But Statistics Canada's third-quarter population estimate for 2009 shows more people left Alberta for other provinces than moved in.

That's the first time that has happened since 1994.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Troops enter what's to be the last year in combat role

AFGHANISTAN Canada is heading into what is supposed to be its last full year of combat in Kandahar, just as the U.S. pours thousands more troops into the embattled province in what experts believe will be the ultimate showdown with the Taliban.

The increased fighting is expected to unfold against a backdrop of a widening political controversy in Ottawa over the alleged torture of Afghan prisoners early in the war, what the Conservative government knew about it, and what it did to stop it. There is no denying 2010 will be the watershed year in the eight-year-old Afghan conflict.

NATO's top commander and architect of the rebooted war strategy said recently it will be the end of 2010 before the allies know if they are winning or losing.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

SNOW Most of Canada will see a white Christmas. But Environment Canada's senior climatologist David Phillips adds about one-quarter of Canadians will see a green Christmas.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Learn how to scan the barcode with the instructions at the top of pg 3

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Gordie Howe, Pinball Clemons carry torch
Hockey great Gordie Howe took a turn carrying the Olympic torch today in southwestern Ontario, in the community of Lasalle. Earlier, CFL legend Mike (Pinball) Clemons carried the Olympic flame through the village of North Buxton. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tippett guilty on all counts

Dad of five convicted of kidnapping, sexually assaulting girl

A married father of five was found guilty yesterday of kidnapping and sexually assaulting a 12-year-old Peterborough, Ont., girl.

Stanley Tippett, 33, was arrested Aug. 6, 2008 after the girl was found half-naked behind a school in Courtice, some 70 kilometres from Peterborough.

Ontario Superior Court Justice Bruce Glass found Tippett guilty of all seven counts he was facing, including kidnapping, sexual assault and sexual interference.

Tippett had testified that he came across a group of young drunken girls in south-end Peterborough and that two of them, including the 12 year old, got into his van. He told the court that minutes after dropping off the older girl he was carjacked by two men at gunpoint and ditched in the country.

The Crown argued that there was no truth in Tippett's testimony about the carjackers.

Outside the court the girl's grandmother said she was "more than happy with the verdict. At least this way maybe he can't hurt another child," she said.

The victim was in court for the verdict and the woman said her granddaughter wanted to be there to "start her own healing."

Const. Robbie Harding, with Durham Regional Police, testified during the trial that he responded to a call at the high school after receiving reports of screams and crying in a wooded area.

THE CANADIAN PRESS


THE CANADIAN PRESS/PETER REDMAN

Stanley Tippett arrives at the Superior Court of Justice in Peterborough, Ont., yesterday. He was found guilty of sexual assault and kidnapping.

Harper named top newsmaker

SURVEY Stephen Harper began the year facing crater-sized political potholes at home, so he adopted a time-honoured coping mechanism of Canadian prime ministers: He hit the road internationally.

New York, China, India, South Korea — all were ports of call aimed at burnishing Harper's image at home as a trusted economic helmsman in a time of unprecedented financial uncertainty.

The strategy, it seems, worked like a charm: Harper used a steep recession to his political advantage and emerged stronger than ever in his four years in office, a feat that has earned him the title of 2009 Newsmaker of the Year in the annual survey of news organizations by The Canadian Press.

"His personal forays onto the international stage and his surprising positions on major issues such as climate change are criticized, but he sticks to his guns," said Maurice Cloutier, managing editor of Sherbrooke's La Tribune.


Harper

"Mr. Harper seems to have won his bet that Canadians are less concerned with Canada's image abroad and more so with more personal interests in issues such as the economy and public security."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Conservatives mull word to replace 'multiculturalism'

CULTURE Jason Kenney is the federal minister in charge of Canada's multiculturalism. But for the last couple of years, he's been wondering whether "pluralism" might be a better word to describe this country's cultural diversity.

"We need a term that has a deeper meaning; that talks about the deeply different world views or belief systems that people have."
Jason Kenney, multiculturalism minister

And so have government officials, according to documents obtained by the Toronto Star.

"What if the picture we have of ourselves shifted Canada as a multicultural society to Canada as a pluralistic society?" is the question posed in a series of slides prepared for a September 2008 discussion within government.

"Would it change the way we design policy and programs? Would the notion of Canadian identity change?"

In Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Canada, where blue is the new red, and much attention is paid to symbols and logos, word choice is significant. And with Kenney's recent rollout of a new citizenship study guide, it is also obvious that the Conservative government has been thinking about how to update the Canadian national identity.

Multiculturalism, according to Kenney and the documents, may have had the result of keeping various cultures separate in Canada, while "pluralism" is focused on getting cultures to work together.

"I started using the term a little bit, firstly because I was looking for a terminology that went beyond parallel cultural silos," Kenney says. "I think that's one understanding of multiculturalism — that we set up a bunch of cultural silos that don't communicate between one another. My emphasis has been on a more integrated multiculturalism, building bridges between communities and ensuring full equality of opportunity for new Canadians in mainstream society."

Nearly 30 years since multiculturalism was enshrined in the Constitution, Kenney believes that the word has become stuck in some old ways of thinking.

"Multiculturalism says to a lot of people 'kiosks at folk fests,'" Kenney says.

"We need a term that has a deeper meaning; that talks about the deeply different world views or belief systems that people have, and I thought pluralism perhaps speaks more to that."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Two Alberta boys, 14, charged with murder

VIOLENCE Two 14-year-old boys have been charged with second-degree murder in the death of a 36-year-old man in northern Alberta.

RCMP say Hector Cardinal of Lac La Biche died of blunt force trauma stemming from an alleged altercation in the community on Monday.

One of the young suspects was arrested Tuesday evening and will appear in a Lac La Biche courtroom Jan. 4. A warrant has been issued for the arrest of the second teen.

A second altercation in the community the same day left another man from the area in an Edmonton hospital with life-threatening injuries.

RCMP say they have not yet been able to make any direct links between the violent incidents.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NOTICE: Christmas Day and New Year's Day Collection & Processing Services Garbage/Organics/Recyclables

Residents of Halifax Regional Municipality are advised that there will be **no** garbage, organics or recyclables collection services on Christmas Day, Friday, December 25, 2009. Collection services for that day will be provided on **Boxing Day, Saturday, December 26, 2009.** There will be **no** garbage, organics or recyclables collection services on New Year's Day, Friday, January 1, 2010. Collection services for that day will be provided on the **next day, Saturday, January 2, 2010.**

No Collection Christmas Day Friday, **December 25**, 2009	**Collection will occur Boxing Day, Saturday, December 26, 2009**
No Collection New Year's Day Friday, **January 1**, 2010	**Collection will occur** the next day **Saturday, January 2, 2010**
Otter Lake Facility Closed Christmas Day, Friday, Dec. 25th Sunday, Dec. 27th New Year's Day, Friday, Jan. 1st Sunday, Jan. 3rd	**Otter Lake Facility Open** Dec. 24th & 31st - 7am to 6pm Dec. 26th, 28th, 29th, 30th - 7am tp 7pm Jan. 2nd - 7am to 7pm
HRM Recycling Plant Closed Christmas Day, Friday, Dec. 25th New Year's Day, Friday, Jan. 1st	**HRM Recycling Plant Open** Dec. 24th, 26th - 7:30 am to 6:00 pm Dec. 31st & Jan. 2nd - 7:30 am to 6:00 pm

Collection services can begin as early as 7:00 a.m. To ensure collection, residents may place materials curbside the evening prior to collection day. The HRM's residential Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Depot will be **Closed** Saturday, December 26th and Saturday, January 2nd but will be **Open** on Saturday, January 9th, 2010 from 9 am to 4 pm.

After the Holidays...

- Natural Christmas trees: picked up on your organics collection week; must be free of plastic, tinsel, ornaments, metal rings, nails, stands and plastic tree bags
- Compost or mulch your greenery (boughs, trees, etc.)
- Wreaths with metal wire frame or plastic cord go in your garbage bag
- Recycle paper gift wrap free of ribbons, bows and ornaments; place in a grocery bag
- Non-paper gift wrap and foil wrap: place in your garbage bag
- Corrugated cardboard: tie and bundle for recycling
- Boxboard (shoe and cereal type boxes): place in your green cart
- Recycling/re-use tips: save gift wrap, bows, ribbons, cards, etc....for use next year; give old toys and clothing to a charitable organization

Thank you and have a safe and happy holiday season. For more information on HRM's composting and recycling programs, check your 2009 or 2010 collection schedule, visit our website at www.halifax.ca/wrms or call 490-4000.

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
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R333 6912

Man with knife in chest felt like having coffee

A man who walked into a Michigan diner with a 12.5-centimetre knife stuck in his chest ordered a coffee and complained only about the cold weather. The 52-year-old man called 911 Sunday to ask that an ambulance be sent. He said he had been stabbed during an attempted robbery, then walked about a kilometre to the restaurant and called 911 from a pay phone. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World



Movement to regulate drugs in U.S. water

Federal regulators under U.S. President Barack Obama have sharply shifted course on policy toward pharmaceutical residues in drinking water, taking a first step toward regulating some of the contaminants while acknowledging they may threaten human health. It was reported in 2008 that drinking water of 51 million Americans contains minute concentrations of a multitude of drugs such as antibiotics, sedatives and sex hormones.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Philippines **Christmas in an evacuation shelter**



BULLIT MARQUEZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Children, all evacuees of Mayon volcano's ongoing mild eruption, queue up for ice cream at an evacuation centre Wednesday. Despite the risk of an imminent explosive eruption of the 2,460-metre Mayon, some residents weary of shelters are conspiring to go back to their abandoned villages for traditional Christmas Eve family gatherings.

Dissident on trial

Diplomats, including Canadian, barred from entering Chinese court

A high-profile Chinese dissident accused of subversion was tried at a two-hour hearing Wednesday that shut out foreign diplomats concerned over a case that reflects the communist government's deep suspicion of calls for political reform.

Liu Xiaobo was detained a year ago, just before the release of an unusually direct appeal for more civil rights in China he co-authored called Charter 08, signed by scores of China's top intellectuals. He faces up to 15 years in jail. The verdict is due Friday.

International human rights groups and Western nations have heavily criticized Liu's detention. A dozen diplomats, including from Canada, the United States, Britain, Germany and Australia, stood outside the Beijing courthouse in freezing weather, barred from entering, along with a handful of Liu's Chinese supporters.



Liu Xiaobo

"We call on the government of China to release him immediately," said Gregory May, first secretary with the U.S. Embassy.

Liu, 53, a literary critic and former professor, spent 20 months in jail for joining the 1989 student-led protests in Tiananmen Square that were crushed in a military crackdown. In his writings, most published only on the Internet, he has strongly called for civil rights and political reform.

Charter 08 demands a new constitution guaranteeing human rights, the open election of public officials, and freedom of religion and expression. Some 10,000 people have signed it in the past year, though a news blackout and Internet censorship have left most Chinese unaware that it exists.

Liu has been the only person arrested over the charter, but rights groups said several signers have been harassed or fired from their jobs, and warned not to attend the trial or write about it online. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

LOS ANGELES A judge has denied a request from an AIDS advocacy group calling for mandatory use of condoms on porn sets. Judge David Yaffe on Tuesday rejected a petition from the AIDS Healthcare Foundation that health officials hadn't done enough to prevent sexually transmitted diseases in the porn industry, according to the Los Angeles Times. The group sued L.A. County in July after data showed there were more than 3,700 STD cases in five years reported by a clinic that serves porn actors.

PHILIPPINES At least 27 people are missing after a passenger ferry collided with a fishing boat in Manila Bay in the Philippines. Philippine coast guard spokesman Armand Balilo says at least 46 people were rescued following the collision early Thursday.

INDIANA Police say a fifth-grader handed out about $300 to others on the school bus Friday. Problem is, they say, the cash was among some $10,000 US he took from his grandparents' safe. The cash was later returned to them.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

m.metronews.ca

ScanLife

The economy ended the year in much better shape than it was last January, but there are five key reasons economists think we're not out of the woods yet. Scan this barcode for the full story.

Objective defeated as balloon boy parents barred from profiting from stunt

COLORADO The parents who carried out the balloon boy hoax were sentenced to jail Wednesday and given strict probation conditions that forbid them from earning any money from the spectacle for four years.

"Jay Leno said it best when he said, 'This is a copycat game.' And people will copycat this event. (The Heenes) need to go to jail so people don't do that."
Andrew Lewis, deputy district attorney

Richard Heene was sentenced to 90 days in jail, including 60 days of work release that will let him pursue his job as a construction contractor while serving his time.

His wife, Mayumi, was sentenced to 20 days in jail.

Richard Heene choked back tears as he said he was sorry, especially to the rescue workers who chased down false reports that his six-year-old son had floated away in a balloon on Oct. 15. It was a stunt designed to generate attention for a reality TV show.

Judge Stephen Schapanski then ordered Heene to begin a 30-day jail term on Jan. 11, delaying the start of the sentence for two weeks so he can spend the holidays with his family. Schapanski allowed Heene to serve the remaining 60 days of his jail term under work release, meaning he can work during the day but spend his nights in jail.

The Heenes' probation will be revoked if they are found to be profiting from any book, TV, movie or other deals related to the stunt.

Deputy District Attorney Andrew Lewis also asked for full restitution to reimburse authorities for the cost of investigating the hoax — an amount that could exceed $50,000 US.

"Jay Leno said it best when he said, 'This is a copycat game,'" Lewis said.

"And people will copycat this event. (The Heenes) need to go to jail so people don't do that."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pediatrician's alleged victims as young as six months old

DELAWARE A pediatrician is accused of molesting more than 100 patients, including some who appear to be no more than six months old, and police said the doctor used video cameras to record some of the attacks in exam rooms.

Alexis Slutsky, a deputy attorney general assigned to the state's Child Predator Task Force, said the volume of evidence seized from Dr. Earl Bradley's practice and home, including videotapes and computer files, makes it difficult to estimate the number of victims.

"I'm comfortable in saying probably well over 100 potential victims," she said at a news conference.

The case has shocked the community of Lewes, a town of about 3,100.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Disturbing charges

- An 18-page document detailed the alleged attacks in exam rooms, which had Disney themes such as Pinocchio, at BayBees Pediatrics, Bradley's solo practice. A detective who viewed the assaults described in court papers the six-foot, 225-pound Bradley as having a "violently enraged expression on his face" in one video involving a two-year-old.

Jamaica **No serious injuries in runway mishap**



LLOYD ROBINSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Workers sift through debris around American Airlines flight 331, which crash-landed late Tuesday night in Kingston, Jamaica. The jet, carrying 154 people including three Canadians, skidded across a runway in heavy rain, bouncing across the tarmac and injuring more than 40 people before it stopped just short of the Caribbean Sea. There were no fatalities, officials said, and the Department of Foreign Affairs said the Canadians were not among the injured.

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ALL stores open at 8AM Dec. 26th only!



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Venice streets flooded
An unusually high tide flooded most of Venice early yesterday, forcing tourists and residents to wade through knee-high waters or use improvised boardwalks set up in St. Mark's Square and other landmarks. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Senate bill set to revamp U.S. health care

Passage a victory for Obama, but bill must still be reconciled with House legislation

The U.S. Senate was poised to hand President Barack Obama a huge Christmas Eve victory by approving a $913 billion overhaul of U.S. health care, capping months of struggle in the face of solid Republican opposition.

Thursday's vote on the bill extending health care coverage to 30 million uninsured Americans brings Obama closer to achieving his top domestic priority. But the final step may be the hardest: reconciling the Senate bill with a significantly different version already approved by the House of Representatives.

A compromise would have to be approved by both chambers — and could collapse if Obama loses the support of any Democrat in the Senate or a handful in the House.

Passage of the bill Thursday was all but inevitable. Wednesday, Democrats prevailed on the last of three procedural votes requiring the support of all of the party's 58 members, plus two allied independents. Thursday's vote will require only a simple majority of the 100-member body.

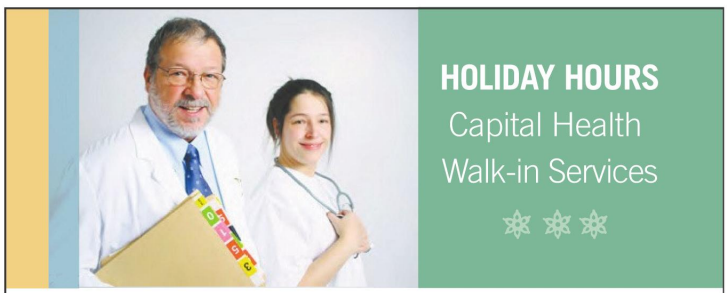
"It has been a long time coming," said a leading Democratic senator, Max Baucus. "I thank God that I have lived to see this day."

The bill's passage will offer Obama a bright end to an often rocky year that began with huge hopes following his election victory. His public approval level now hovers around 50 per cent. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Health system overhaul

The legislation being passed in the U.S. Senate would bring important changes in the way health care is funded:

- Health insurance would still be provided mainly by employers, rather than the government, but it would now be mandatory for Americans to have insurance.
- Lower- and middle-income families would receive subsidies to pay for insurance.
- Unpopular insurance company practices, such as denying coverage to people with pre-existing health conditions, would be banned.



CAPITAL HEALTH WISHES YOU A HEALTHY, HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON. To prepare for your health needs please note the following holiday service changes:

Most walk-in blood collection services are open for regular hours throughout the holidays but will close at noon on Christmas Eve. St. Margaret's Bay, Mt. Uniacke and Woodlawn Clinic blood collection centres are closed between December 24 and January 4.

Walk in X-ray services at all Capital Health hospitals, except Musquodoboit Valley Memorial and Eastern Shore Memorial hospitals, will be closed from noon on December 24 through January 4. For hours at Eastern Shore and Musquodoboit Valley, please call the hospitals directly.

Community Mental Health clinics will close at noon on December 24. They are open regular hours from December 29 to December 31, and closed on January 1.

If you have urgent blood collection, x-ray or mental health requirements, please contact your family doctor.

For more information on holiday hours, visit the Capital Health website at www.cdha.nshealth.ca

Capital Health reminds you to anticipate your health needs in advance of the holidays:

- Ensure your prescriptions are filled
- Do not over-exert yourself shoveling snow
- Enjoy holiday cheer in moderation
- If you have a chronic medical condition, anticipate your needs and have them taken care of in advance

Capital Health
www.cdha.nshealth.ca

Dutch teen sailor back in father's care

HOME SAFE A Dutch court ruled Wednesday that 14-year-old sailor Laura Dekker can remain in her father's custody after she ran away from home and travelled alone to the Caribbean. The ruling by the Utrecht District Court clears the way once again for Dekker to pursue her goal of being the youngest person to sail solo around the world. "The court sees no need to remove Laura from her home at this moment," judges wrote.


Laura Dekker

Laura had originally planned to depart this year with the support of her father. But that plan was blocked in October by the court, which ordered her to prepare more and wait until 2010 before starting.

Frustrated, she fled last week with $5,000, prompting an international search. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Iraq Festival of Ashoura


ALAA AL-MARJANI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A Shiite man flagellates himself during the festival of Ashoura in Najaf, Iraq, Wednesday. Bombs targeted Iraqi Christians and Shiite Muslims Wednesday, killing several people and wounding about three dozen before coinciding religious observances that will take place under heavy guard. Security forces in recent days have been concerned that the Shiite holy observances would be targeted by large-scale attacks.

Irish bishop steps down over abuse

COVERUP A second Roman Catholic bishop in Ireland announced Wednesday that he will resign in the wake of a damning investigation into decades of covering up child abuse in the Dublin archdiocese.

Bishop Jim Moriarty revealed his decision to priests and other officials in his diocese of Kildare and Leithlin, southwest of Dublin. Officials said Moriarty planned to travel to Rome to tender his resignation to Pope Benedict XVI, who has sole power to hire and fire bishops.

Moriarty said he accepted investigators' finding that he failed to react properly when told about abuse cases, particularly of one priest convicted of molesting girls in 1997. But he insisted his inaction reflected his colleagues' poor communication and secrecy.

"… The system of management and communications was seriously flawed," Moriarty said in a statement. "However, with the benefit of hindsight, I accept that, from the time I became an auxiliary bishop, I should have challenged the prevailing culture."

Last week Bishop Donal Murray of Limerick resigned, becoming the first high-profile casualty of a government-ordered probe into the church's failure to tell authorities about more than 170 suspected child abusers in Dublin.

Abuse victims welcomed yesterday's resignation announcement, but emphasized that they believe three other current bishops named in the report must quit as well.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Grim findings

- A 720-page government-ordered report, published in November, examined the cases of 46 pedophile priests, concluding that church leaders in Dublin routinely shielded the offenders from the law for decades until 1995, when the church began sharing some files with police.

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Comment

Season for memories

Relating



I have no way of knowing under what circumstances you're reading this, whether you're on your way home for the holidays or headed to work, trying to finish your shopping or just catching your breath.

It would be foolish of me to assume anything about what your holidays might look like, since you might not even know. I hope they're peaceful and spent with those you love, but that can be harder than it sounds.

Tomorrow will be whatever it is, and it often looks nothing like the Christmas cards. Our families have bent into all sorts of surprising shapes, and some of us are trying to make it to two or more Christmases, sometimes in different cities or countries.

Travel at this time of year is rough because it's so often mandatory, and schedules are tight. The weather is predictably unpredictable, and countless people find themselves stranded in airports, in hotels, anywhere but where they planned to be. Mangers, even.

And for many of us, there are empty, unfillable spots at the table, where somebody used to be and never will be again. That hurt gets quieter, but it doesn't go away, and it has a way of flaring up at this time of year. It isn't all Merry Happy.

One of the best Christmases I remember was also one of the worst. My father had died only a couple of months before and the rest of us were going to get together at my sister's, traditional as can be, closing ranks against grief.

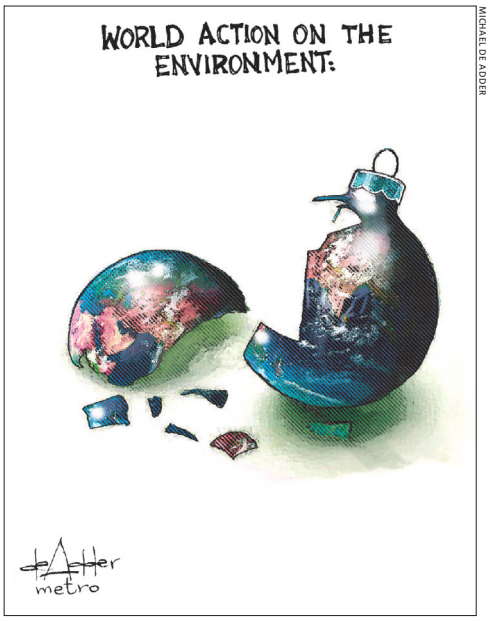
It didn't work out that way. Instead, we got waylaid 300 miles away with a house full of burst pipes and a stack of estate and insurance chores to chew over with a lawyer who didn't want to be there either.

We ended up stuck in a motel room, but we were stuck together. We had some laughs as well as some sobs, and got some laundry done at the coin wash. O holy night.

It wasn't what we expected and this holiday seldom is. Expectations are a big part of the problem, as we all try to transform ourselves from real people to perfect happy families in perfect happy sweaters.

So have yourself a merry little whatever, try to accept the relatives for who they are and who they are trying to be for the occasion. I wish you surpassingly great presents and more hugs than you can handle, but if it doesn't work out, you'll be in good company as we imperfectly celebrate another year of this imperfect, irreplaceable life.

Steve Collins offers his best guesses on relationships for Metro every two weeks.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

Feminist newsmakers of the past year

FourthWave



If you needed any proof that feminism is necessary, all you need to do is look to this year's newsmakers. My feminist heroes for 2009 defended and expanded our ideas of what women can be, while the villains tried to scale them back:

Lady Gaga: There's a savvy woman behind the latex bodysuits and comically oversized sunglasses: Gaga takes her persona to an extreme because she recognizes it is constructed, and she criticizes double standards between female and male musicians (being open about sex undermines her music, while his exploits heighten his). And can you remember the last time a pop star used the F-word? Lady G called a Los Angeles Times writer "a little bit of a feminist, like I am," adding, "women need and want someone to look up to that they feel have the full sense of who they are."

Rihanna: Speaking of singers, here's one that reluctantly championed women's rights. After being assaulted by Chris Brown, Rihanna was silent about the whole ordeal until this fall, when she says she realized her fame afforded her a voice to educate women on domestic abuse.


Lady Gaga

Neda Agha-Soltan: During the disputed Iranian election, Neda was on her way to a pro-reform rally June 20 when a sniper allegedly shot and killed her. The haunting video of her last moments galvanized protesters and lent a face to the thousands shouting to make their votes count. Since the crackdown, the government has harassed and arrested prominent activists — women's rights organizers and Nobel peace laureate Shirin Ebadi among them.

Stephen Harper: In recent years, the prime minister has killed funding for advocacy groups and ideologically neutered Status of Women Canada (a federal policy organization charged with improving the lives of women) by removing the essential "equality" part from its mandate. This September, Harper crowed about cuts to the Court Challenges Program, which financially assists people mounting constitutional court challenges — and called the people that used that funding a "left-wing fringe group."

VANOC: It started when a group of female ski jumpers challenged VANOC's decision to exclude its event at the 2010 Games, but ended Tuesday when the Supreme Court refused to hear its case. Sadly, it's neither the first nor last Olympics-related trampling of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms: The City of Vancouver ordered the removal of an anti-Olympic mural, while VANOC demanded a local restaurant named Olympia change its moniker. The heroines in all this are the athletes — some are teenagers fighting for women's rights, while at that age I was busy popping zits and moping.

Canice Leung is a former editor of Ryerson University feminist magazine McClung's, copy editor at Metro, ardent feminist and loudmouth.

Worth mentioning

North Korea gambles with new arms route

North Korea, banned from selling arms by UN sanctions, may have gambled and lost when it dispatched 35 tons of weapons by air rather than by sea as it has done in the past. Authorities seized the plane, which may have been bound for Iran, during a refuelling stop in Thailand.

The 11-day saga remains shrouded in mystery and missing pieces, including the final destination of the Ilyushin Il-76 cargo plane now under Thai custody along with its five-man crew.

Among difficulties facing investigators is a fly-by-night infrastructure seemingly rigged up for the flight, including a Hong Kong-based company reportedly involved that was only incorporated Nov. 2 and whose director could not be traced there or at his address in Spain.

But experts in South Korea say one thing appears clear: North Korea is seeking new ways to bust through a U.S.-led interdiction program of its arms sales.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sanctions

- The UN imposed sanctions in June, banning North Korea from exporting any arms after the communist regime conducted a nuclear test and test-fired missiles.

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84% The number of Canadians who would prefer to receive a meaningful gift that would help someone else, rather than another traditional gift like a pair of socks or a sweater.

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India emerges as world leader in small cars

India has emerged the leader in small cars, overtaking Japan, as declining sales in Western markets coupled with robust growth in Asia redraws the global map of the auto industry. More than 892,000 basic cars will be sold in India this year, surpassing the 708,034 forecast for Japan, according to J.D. Power and Associates. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Business

DOLLAR	GAS	OIL	TSX
US 95.38¢	US $5.82	US $76.67	11,658.70
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EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Task Force readies 2010 report

Group appointed by Flaherty to create strategy on financial literacy as debtloads rise

The federal government's much-ballyhooed Task Force on Financial Literacy is scheduled to release its first report in early 2010 as its 13 members gear up for a cross-country public consultation.

Appointed by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty last June, the task force has the lofty goal of creating Canada's first-ever national strategy on financial literacy.

Although the tide appears to have turned on the recession, task force members say there is a pressing need for Canada to develop a potent action plan because consumers are deeper in debt than ever before.

Faced with job losses, clawed-back benefits and shrinking household incomes, increasing numbers are relying on credit to cover their daily living expenses. And that troubling trend has critics doubting whether the task force can inspire real change.

145%
Household debt-to-income ratio hit a record 145 per cent in September, so for every $100 of income, Canadians owe $145 in debt.

Economic woes aside, some experts argue that financial literacy programs are ineffective and amount to little more than a political guise designed to quell calls for more government regulation of the financial sector.

Task force member Laurie Campbell, however, says such criticisms are "very short-sighted." Since June, she and her colleagues have been assessing the state of financial literacy in Canada.

That involves gauging both domestic and international programs to determine which ones work best.

"We know there is no doubt a wealth of information out there, but we want to make sure that we're able to find the best fit and something that is going to make a long-term difference," said Campbell, who is also executive director of Credit Canada, a non-profit credit-counselling agency.

"Because it is not enough to give people information, we have to give people information that they can actually absorb and turn around and use."

The task force's next step is the release of a consultation document in February.

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Cars **Holiday shopping**



JEFF CHIU/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A salesman shows the features inside of a Buick LaCrosse CXS, at Hilltop Buick Pontiac GMC in Richmond, Calif., on Wednesday. Wealthier car buyers are returning to the showroom this holiday season, but they're pinching pennies of a sort by choosing smaller models of Mercedes or BMW — or buying the fanciest cars from other manufacturers.

Cyber crimes will move to smartphones in 2010: Experts

INTERNET As usual, we can expect the Internet to be rife with potential cyber crimes and annoyances next year — more spam, more fake antivirus software and more computers hijacked by criminals.

But 2010 will also see more attacks moving to smartphones, now that the devices are being used more like mobile computers, predict security experts. What's expected to be targeted are "apps" — software applications that let users do things like mobile banking and payments, as well as any other personal or work information on their smartphones.

"Attackers will probably be devoting more time to creating malware for those devices," said David Cowings of Symantec Security Response.

"Attackers will probably be devoting more time to creating malware for (smartphones)."
David Cowings, Symantec Security

The move to smartphones is natural because many users have them synchronized with their computers to allow better access to email, contacts and work documents that often contain a wealth of information. These kinds of cyber attacks could infect both the smartphone and the PC, said Cowings.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

In **brief**

TELECOM Nortel Networks Corp. said Wednesday it has entered an agreement to sell all its carrier voice over Internet protocol and application solutions business to Genband Inc. for $282 million US.

DEFAULT Ski resort giant Intrawest ULC may default on a $1.4 billion US loan and is in talks with lenders about debt repayment options, according to a report. The report from Bloomberg that cited unidentified sources with direct knowledge of the matter, said Intrawest may be pushed closer to default if it fails to make a $524 million US payment due Wednesday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Economy to continue uphill, but jobless stats to stay flat: Analysts

PREDICTION Economists are cautiously optimistic that "recession" will not be a prominent phrase in the Canadian vocabulary next year as the economy trudges out from its second-worst annual decline in nearly half a century.

Most economists predict a gross domestic product growth rate between 2.5 to three per cent in 2010, about average by historical standards, but not robust enough to make a dent in the 8.5 per cent unemployment rate.

The growth would essentially reverse the 2.5 per cent decline seen this year.

This year will rank behind only 1982 as the worst year of economic decline since record-keeping began in 1961, said Douglas Porter, deputy chief economist with BMO Capital Markets.

Statistics Canada reported Wednesday a modest 0.2 per cent month-over-month growth in real gross domestic product in October, leading many economists to believe growth in the last quarter of 2009 could reach as much as four per cent.

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Deadline looms for Pacquiao-Mayweather Jr. fight

The promoter for boxing sensation Manny Pacquiao says a fight against Floyd Mayweather Jr. will not happen unless Mayweather's camp drops its insistence for Olympic-style blood testing. Promoter Bob Arum says if that doesn't happen by Thursday, the proposed March 13 fight that would have likely been the richest ever in boxing is over. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports



Wildcats trade for Deschamps

The Moncton Wildcats acquired forward Nicolas Deschamps, left, from the Chicoutimi Sagueneens on Wednesday in exchange for forward Matthew Bissonnette and defenceman Jeremy Barriault. The Wildcats also gave up a first-round pick in 2011 and a fourth-round pick in 2010 in the deal. THE CANADIAN PRESS

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

'Right in the thick of things'

A change of atmosphere on the club has the Halifax Lions fighting for a playoff spot

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

The only goal the Halifax Lions set this season was to make the playoffs. So far, they're well on their way.

At the Maritime Junior A Hockey League's holiday break, the Lions have gradually crawled out of last in the six-team Bent Division, and are now in fourth place with a 12-12-2 record and games in hand on their nearest challengers.

For a club that finished with just 10 wins last season and six the year before, the Lions can't complain.

"From Day 1, the biggest thing has been to change the atmosphere here and make winning a priority, and it's slowly starting to happen," said Lions head coach Troy Ryan, who took over the job in the off-season.

"We found ways to lose games in the past, and now, we're starting to find ways to win."

The Lions have four games in hand on the fifth-place Yarmouth Mariners and six games in hand on the last-place Amherst Ramblers.

Their winning percentage of .462 puts them in the middle of the overall standings and their power play — operating at 25 per cent — is No. 1 in the league.

"We're right in the thick of things," Ryan said.

Forwards Travis Perry (25 points in 25 games), Stuart Lenehan (10 goals) and Wayne Bedecki (18 points) have led the way offensively.

Power-play quarterback Dylan King, defenceman Kyle Mariani and captain Robbie Veriker have also been key factors in the Lions' improvement.

Veriker, who Ryan calls a "hard-nosed, two-way guy," arrived in a September trade and has made a difference.

"He's holding guys accountable and that's maybe something we didn't have in the past," Ryan said.

The Lions are off until Jan. 7, but they'll be thrown right back into the fire with 13 games in January. If they survive that stretch, the playoffs should be a virtual guarantee.

"It's going to be a tough test," Ryan said, "but if we come out of that with a .500 record at the end of January, what we gain from that will be beneficial down the road."

Standings

Bent Division standings at the holiday break.

	W	L	O/S	P
Truro	19	4	4	42
Pictou	17	11	1	35
Bridgewater	13	10	6	32
HALIFAX	**12**	**12**	**2**	**26**
Yarmouth	11	15	4	26
Amherst	11	19	2	24



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

Troy Ryan took over as Lions head coach in the off-season.

Former Mooseheads thriving with Truro

SUCCESS The Truro Bearcats are taking a shot at a Maritime Junior A Hockey League title, and a trio of veteran Halifax Mooseheads castoffs are leading their charge.



Ben MacAskill

Ben MacAskill is the team's captain and leads Bearcats defencemen with three goals and 15 assists in 27 games, while hard-hitting forward Eric Louis-Seize has suddenly found an offensive touch and is second in team scoring with 30 points in 26 games.

Yuri Cheremetiev, who joined the Bearcats after being cut by the Titan earlier this month, already has three goals and an assist in four games.

Winning gold won't be easy

TEAM CANADA They are the home team and therefore the favourite, but winning gold at the world junior hockey championship won't be easy for Canada.

The Swedes, who lost 5-1 to their hosts in the final last year in Ottawa, are back with big goaltender Jacob Markstrom and a fleet of gifted forwards, and the Russians, who lost to Canada in a shootout in the semifinals, should be just as dangerous with Nikita Filatov cruising for goals.

Meanwhile, the Canadians have lost some of their best scorers to the NHL, like John Tavares, Matt Duchene and Evander Kane, as well as the injured Cody Hodgson, and may need to rely more than usual on defence and team play as they try to win a record sixth consecutive gold medal.

"The record is exciting in itself, especially to do it on home soil," said Canadian defenceman Ryan Ellis.

"It's important for us to win this and be part of history.

"It would help if we had a lot of those guys in the NHL, but I think we'll be fine. Everyone will step up and play better than they ever have."

The tournament, officially called the IIHF Under-20 World Championship, kicks off Saturday with Canada playing the first round in Saskatoon in Group A with Slovakia, the U.S., Latvia and Switzerland, while the tighter Group B in Regina has Sweden, Russia, the Czech Republic, Finland and Austria. The final is Jan. 5.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



GEOFF HOWE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada's Brayden Schenn is stuffed by Czech Republic goalie Pavel Francouz during world junior exhibition play Wednesday.

Indianapolis looking to extend perfect record to 15-0

NFL To be perfect or not to be? The Indianapolis Colts don't consider it much of a dilemma, really.

They certainly aren't going to sit Peyton Manning for long as he pursues an unprecedented fourth MVP award and the career 50,000-yard passing mark. And on Sunday they host the Jets, a team that has shown little ability to keep up offensively.

So Manning could get in his work, lift the Colts to 15-0, knock the Jets out of playoff contention and finish off an unbeaten home schedule before heading to Buffalo for the finale.

And a share of history.

"You don't want to lose a game. As a competitor, as an athlete, you want to go out every single game and win," defensive end Dwight Freeney said. "That being said, we're going out there and playing hard every game no matter who is out there. Maybe the starters may not be out there the whole game, but that's no excuse. We still have to try to get it done regardless."

"You don't want to lose a game. As a competitor, as an athlete, you want to go out every single game and win."
Dwight Freeney, Colts defensive end

They have gotten it done 23 straight games, an NFL regular-season record. To think they will make a halfhearted effort at an unbeaten slate is, well, unthinkable.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports in brief

BASKETBALL Celtics forward Paul Pierce had fluid drained from his right knee Wednesday and will miss the next two weeks. Pierce did not make the flight to Orlando for a Christmas Day game against the Magic.

BASEBALL The Athletics have finalized a $5.25 million US, one-year contract with free agent outfielder Coco Crisp. The deal, announced Wednesday, pays Crisp $4.75 million next year and includes a $5.75 million club option for 2011 with a $500,000 buyout.

FOOTBALL An ankle injury prevented Buffalo Bills starter Ryan Fitzpatrick from practising Wednesday, opening the possibility for Brian Brohm to make his NFL debut at Atlanta this weekend. Interim head coach Perry Fewell declined to rule out Fitzpatrick, saying the quarterback was feeling better after he was hurt in a 17-10 loss against New England last weekend.

BASEBALL The power-hungry Atlanta Braves are hoping longtime third baseman Troy Glaus can fill the team's void at first base. The Braves have reached a preliminary agreement on a one-year contract with Glaus, a person with knowledge of the negotiations told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

BASKETBALL Pau Gasol has agreed to a three-year contract extension with the Los Angeles Lakers, and he's hoping Kobe Bryant follows his lead. Gasol's deal extends through the 2013-14 season, and could be worth more than $60 million US depending on future salary caps.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

SCOREBOARD

QMJHL

HALIFAX MOOSEHEADS HOLIDAY SCHEDULE:

SUNDAY, DEC. 27
Moncton at **HALIFAX**, 4 p.m.
TUESDAY, DEC. 29
HALIFAX at Cape Breton, 7 p.m.
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 30
Cape Breton at **HALIFAX**, 7 p.m.
SATURDAY, JAN. 2
HALIFAX at Bathurst, 7 p.m.
SUNDAY, JAN. 3
HALIFAX at P.E.I., 4 p.m.

PREMIER BASKETBALL LEAGUE

HALIFAX RAINMEN HOLIDAY SCHEDULE:

SUNDAY, JAN. 3
Halifax at Lawton-Fort Sill, 4:35 p.m.

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Alfredsson leaves game
Ottawa Senators forward Daniel Alfredsson left Wednesday night's game against the Pittsburgh Penguins after taking a hit to the head. THE CANADIAN PRESS



KARL B DEBLAKER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Montreal Canadien Sergei Kostitsyn slips the puck past Carolina Hurricanes goalie Cam Ward on Wednesday night in Raleigh, N.C. The Canadiens won 5-1.

Halak stops 46 in win

NHL

Montreal 5 Carolina 1

AT

Glen Metropolit and Andrei Markov are putting the power in Montreal's power play. Not that the Canadiens really needed that much offence — not with Jaroslav Halak stopping pucks like this again.

Metropolit scored two goals with the man advantage after Markov had his third in three games, Halak made 46 saves and the Canadiens routed the Carolina Hurricanes 5-1 on Wednesday night for their third straight victory.

Andrei Kostitsyn and Sergei Kostitsyn added goals, while Tomas Plekanec and Scott Gomez had three assists apiece for the Canadiens, who led 4-1 in the first period.

"We stuck to our game plan — we got pucks in deep, our power play was key right away," Metropolit said. "A team like that, they've been playing hard, but you get them down a couple goals, and maybe they're pressing a little too much, and we took advantage of it."

Montreal, which entered with the NHL's second-best power-play unit, scored three times with the man advantage and is 8-for-13 on the power play through the first three games of a season-high seven-game road trip.

And in this one, there certainly was no shortage of Canadiens putting up impressive numbers.

Plekanec, who assisted on Montreal's first three goals, pushed his three-game point total to nine, and his 36 assists rank second in the league. Halak, who was one save shy of matching the career high he set last time out against Atlanta, has stopped 133-of-137 shots in his last three games.

"You've got to be lucky for us to win these games. I got lucky tonight, I got lucky the night before and before (that)," Halak said. "Hopefully it's going to stick with me."

But the most significant contributions of late may have come from Markov, who missed two months with a leg injury. He has four points in three games while providing instant offence since his return.

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SCOREBOARD

NHL

WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS
Pittsburgh 8 Ottawa 2
Montreal 5 Carolina 1
Minnesota 3 Edmonton 1
N.Y. Islanders 3 Toronto 1
Boston 6 Atlanta 4
Chicago 3 Detroit 0
N.Y. Rangers 4 Florida 1
Philadelphia 5 Tampa Bay 2
Washington 5 Buffalo 2
Dallas 3 Columbus 1
Anaheim at Phoenix
St. Louis at Calgary

THURSDAY TO FRIDAY
No Games Scheduled.

NBA

WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS
Toronto 94 Detroit 64
Miami 80 Utah 70
Minnesota 103 New Jersey 99
New Orleans 108 Golden State 102
Orlando 102 Houston 87
Portland 98 San Antonio 94
Washington 109 Milwaukee 97
Atlanta at Denver
Oklahoma City at Phoenix
Cleveland at Sacramento

THURSDAY
No Games Scheduled.

FRIDAY'S GAMES
Miami at New York
Boston at Orlando
Cleveland at L.A. Lakers
L.A. Clippers at Phoenix
Denver at Portland

Blue Jays complete deal to get Morrow from Mariners

The Toronto Blue Jays are a team without an ace now that Roy Halladay is gone and Wednesday's acquisition of Brandon Morrow does little to immediately change that challenging new reality.



Brandon Morrow

But in picking up the 25-year-old with dominating stuff from the Seattle Mariners, general manager Alex Anthopoulos has added a pure power pitcher to the team's lengthy list of potential starters for 2010, one with an upside that few of the others can match.

"He reminds me a lot of A.J. Burnett in terms of the delivery and the stuff," Anthopoulos said on a conference call after completing the deal that sent reliever Brandon League and minor-league outfielder Johermyn Chavez to Seattle.

"He can throw very hard, it's 98, 99 as if he's playing catch and it's a power curveball in the low 80s, similar to what Burnett did. His changeup is not there right now, it's more of a show-me changeup but it has pretty good action and it has promise, and I think Burnett was kind of the same way. So I think he's got that type of ceiling."

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El Salvador. ..... 9.9 ¢
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Jordan.....3.9 ¢
Kenya from .6.9 ¢
Kuwait.....6.9 ¢
Lebanon ..... 9.9 ¢
Libya.....24.9 ¢
Nepal.....from 7.9 ¢
Oman..... 14.9 ¢
Fiji..... 24.9 ¢
Ghana.....9.9 ¢
Greece.....2.9 ¢
Guatemala.... 10.9 ¢
Guyana.....27.9 ¢
Honduras.....15.9 ¢
Iraq...from..... 4.9 ¢
Israel.....2.9 ¢
Italy..... .2.9 ¢
Russia...from..... 2.9 ¢
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South Korea.. 2.9 ¢
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Trinidad..... 4.9 ¢
U.A.E.....16.9 ¢

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HEAD CURTAIN SIDE IMPACT AIRBAGS	Standard	Not Available	Standard
AIR CONDITIONING	Standard	Optional	Optional
16" ALUMINUM WHEELS	Standard	15" Steel	15" Steel
REMOTE KEYLESS ENTRY	Standard	Not Available	Not Available
POWER DOOR LOCKS	Standard	Standard	Not Available
HP / TORQUE	155/150	138/136	140/128
POWERTRAIN WARRANTY	5-year/160,000 km	5-year/100,000 km	5-year/100,000 km

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‡‡ Value of additional features based on dealer pricing. Vehicle comparison is based on 2010 Cobalt LT (1AL69/1AL37 1SA), 2010 Elantra L Sedan (D4T) and 2010 Civic DX Sedan (FA1529EX). ** Vehicle specification and purchase price according to the information available on the manufacturer's website at time of printing.

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CHEVROLET

For the latest information, visit us at gm.ca, drop by your local Chevrolet dealer or call us at 1-800-GM-DRIVE. ■ $9,000 manufacturer-to-dealer delivery credit available on 2009 Chevrolet Silverado HD pickups (tax exclusive) for cash customers only. $850/$2,350/$1,350 for 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LS Coupe or Sedan R7A/Cobalt LT Coupe or Sedan R7A/Aveo5 LS R7A includes cash credit plus $1,000 Holiday Bonus. Credit will impact the effective APR for finance customers. See your GM dealer for details. ❏ $1,000 holiday cash bonus is a manufacturer-to-dealer delivery credit (tax exclusive) and is reflected in offers in this advertisement. Offer available on all 2009 and 2010 Chevrolet, Pontiac, Buick, GMC and HUMMER models and excluding all Saturn and SAAB models, Camaro, Express/Savana, Corvette ZR1 and Medium Duty Trucks. † Offers apply to the cash purchase prices of 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LS Coupe or Sedan R7A/Cobalt LT Coupe or Sedan R7A/Aveo5 LS R7A new or demonstrator models and apply only to retail customers in the Maritimes. Freight ($1,350/$1,350/$1,350) not included. Cash purchase price reflects discounts or other incentives that are available when consumers opt for a cash purchase offer. By selecting lease or finance offers consumers are foregoing such incentives which may result in a higher effective interest rate. * Financing available on approved credit only from TD Canada Trust; ask your dealer for additional information. Based on finance rates of 4.09%/4.09%/4.09% for 84/84/84 months for 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LS Coupe or Sedan R7A/Cobalt LT Coupe or Sedan R7A/Aveo5 LS R7A. 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Example: $10,000 at 0%/0%/0% APR, the monthly payment is $277.78/$277.78/$277.78 for 36/36/36 months. Cost of borrowing is $0/$0/$0, total obligation $10,000/$10,000/$10,000. This finance rate is not compatible with bi-weekly payments. *†‡ Offers apply as indicated to the purchase of 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LS Coupe or Sedan R7A/Cobalt LT Coupe or Sedan R7A/Aveo5 LS R7A new or demonstrator models and applies only to retail customers in the Maritimes. Dealer order or trade may be necessary. License, insurance, registration, administration fees, tire warranty and handling (where applicable) and taxes not included. Dealers are free to set individual prices. Limited time offers which may not be combined with other offers and may change without notice. See your dealer(s) for conditions and details. ▼ Based on Natural Resources Canada's 2009 Fuel Consumption Guide Ratings for competitors. Your actual fuel consumption may vary. Excludes other GM models. See dealer or gm.ca for additional details. ▲ GMCL will pay the first two months GMAC finance payments for finance terms up to 60 months only, paid up to a maximum monthly finance payment of $400 (tax included). Offer applicable to equal monthly finance agreements with GMAC and subject to GMAC credit approval. Visit gmstudentbonus.ca for more details. ¥ US government star ratings are part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA's) New Car Assessment Program. For more information on safety ratings, go to www.safercar.gov. ¥¥ Return between 30-60 days with less than 4,000 km. Program applies to 2009 and 2010 models only; excludes demos, fleet, lease vehicles and medium duty trucks. Maximum damage allowed of $200. Vehicle usage fee and other restrictions apply. Not available with some other offers. Customer must take retail delivery by January 11, 2010. See dealer or gm.ca for additional details. 1 Available on approved TD Canada Trust purchase financing on terms of 84 months. The first three payments are offered at a maximum of $297 ($99 x 3) for the 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LS R7A, $327 ($109 x 3) for the 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LT R7A and $255 ($85 x 3) for the 2010 Chevrolet Aveo5 LS R7A. The customer will be responsible for making all payments (e.g. 182 bi-weekly payments over 84 months) to the bank; however, he/she will be paid the equivalent of the first three payments by the dealership. The dealership will issue a cheque in the customer's name for the equivalent of three bi-weekly payments. License, insurance, registration, administration fees, tire warranty and handling (where applicable) and taxes not included. Offer applies to vehicles delivered on or before January 11, 2010. Offer applies only to 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LS Coupe or Sedan R7A/Cobalt LT Coupe or Sedan R7A/Aveo5 LS R7A. 2 Offers in this advertisement include the cost of 4 winter tires (up to a value of $450). Tire brand availability may vary depending on dealerships. Tire order may be required. Installation and balancing not included. Tire duties are extra and payable at time of delivery. Offer applies to vehicles delivered on or before January 11, 2010. Offer applies only to 2010 Chevrolet Cobalt LS Coupe or Sedan R7A/Cobalt LT Coupe or Sedan R7A/Aveo5 LS R7A.

Splash out
Longines ladies Dolce Vita watch, $1,750, features 12 numerals set with six diamonds and silver dots. Available at every retailer across Canada that carries Longines. For more, go to longines.com. METRO NEWS SERVICES



HOLIDAY

Shopping Guide

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

Bathing beauties



Rocky Mountain Soap Company's Spicy Mandarin Christmas, $21.50. Includes Large Spicy Mandarin Body Butter, Spicy Mandarin Soap, and Spicy Mandarin Bath Salt. Available at stores across Canada, or at rockymountainsoap.com.



Season's Treatings by Bliss, $45, includes body butter, hand cream and body wash. Available at Sephora. For more, call 1-877-737-4672.



12 Days of Christmas, $74.95, includes a Holiday Bubble Bar, Jingle Spells, and more. Call 1-866-644-5874 or visit lush.ca for more.



Winter White Fresh and Winter White Citrus body wash, $16.50 each; and **Winter White Fresh and Winter White Citrus splash**, $29.50 each. Available at Bath and Body Works stores across Canada. For more, go to bathandbodyworks.com.



Jacky Frost, Gingerbread Woman and Snow Woman bath and shower bubbles, $20 each. For more, go to cakebeauty.com.



MERRY CRANBERRY COLLECTION
Pamper her with cranberry treats from The Body Shop this holiday season. This best-selling holiday favourite collection includes bath and shower gel, soap, lip balm, body butter, frosted shimmer lotion, candles, home fragrance oil, and much more.
$5-$24
Available at The Body Shop stores across Canada.
thebodyshop.ca



Fruity Foaming Bath Collection, $24 (6 x 40 mL). Comes in six colours and fragrances: Field Berries, Pear-Peony, Grapefruit-Guava, Georgia Peach, Very Lemon and Orange-Cantaloupe. Available at Fruits & Passion stores across Canada. For more, go to fruits-passion.com.

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For him
This Remington 8-in-1 Grooming System, $25.93, is available at Walmart. For more, go to walmart.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide

Hey, good-looking



Davidoff Hot Water Eau de Toilette, $65 for 60 mL and $$87 for 110 mL. Also comes in after-shave balm, $49 for 100 mL, and deodorant, $30 for 75 g. Available at Sears and select drug stores across Canada.



Braun Series 7 Pulsonic shaver, $279.99-$339.99, features an LCD display screen. Available in department and mass merchandise stores across Canada.



David Beckham Signature Story for Him, $57 for 50 mL and $69 for 75 mL. Available at drug and department stores across Canada.



Solutions by Vidal Sassoon Haircut Kit, $24.99, is an 18-piece system that includes a barber comb and steel barber shears. Available at Shoppers Drug Mart. For more, go to shoppersdrugmart.ca.



Life Brand Revitalizing Shower Gel Set, $6.99 at Shoppers Drug Mart. For more, go to shoppersdrugmart.ca.



Carry-on Companions, $29.75, includes travel-sizes of Aveda Men Pure-Formance Shampoo and Aveda Men Pure-Formance Grooming Clay. Available in Aveda salons, spas and stores. For more, call 1-800-689-1066.



C.O. Bigelow Barber Collection for Him includes **Elixir White Cologne**, $24.50; **Elixir White Hair & Body Wash**, $13; and **Elixir White Ultra-Light Body Lotion**, $13. Available at Bath and Body Works, bathandbodyworks.com.



Sephora Viva Box Collector's Fragrance Sampler for Him, $45. Includes Ralph Lauren Polo Black, Versace Pour Homme Eau de Toilette and Canali Eau de Toilette. At Sephora. For more, call 1-877-737-4672.

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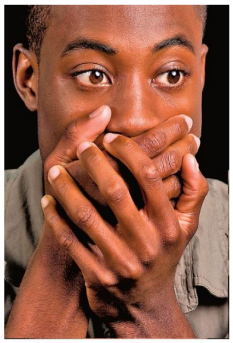
Advice for the procrastinator

BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

It's Dec. 24. You settle in front of the tube with a cider to watch It's A Wonderful Life for the umpteenth time, glance at the perfectly packaged gifts under the tree and suddenly get the feeling you're forgetting something.

Don't fear, present procrastinator!

Just remember these four tips to weather the last-minute holiday shopping hustle...





Did you forget to do your holiday shopping? Don't worry, you still have time to get something for everyone on your list.

Prime for lines

Lineups amid your heel-dragging brethren can encourage public fits of frustration due to the claustrophobic combination of chipper Christmas music, flashing lights and other latecomers inadvertently touching you.

So zen out by bringing a rousing book (have you scoured Metro's holiday book picks yet? If not, check them out online) or iPod to tune out the lot. Podcasts from programs like CBC's Definitely Not The Opera or NPR's This American Life will make you happy by making light of the human absurdity you're surrounded by.

Be thoughtfully thoughtless

Sure, gift cards aren't the most attentive festive offerings, but they're easy, often have no expiry date and save you from picking a present the recipient may completely hate, thereby ruining your relationship forever all because you waited so long to shop. Plus, it doesn't take much to personalize a plastic rectangle. Consider what the giftee likes (makeup? books? power tools?) and pick a shop with a suffocating selection of it. Buy a greeting card, write a schmaltzy message expressing your love, and seal with gift card inside.

Get out and have FUN with the family!
Visit bowlarama.ca or call 453-BOWL (2695) for details
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When all else fails, remember the two Fs...

Fragrances and full-refund! Perfume and cologne provide a perfect outlet to buy your way out of Christmas neglect. Go expensive: Black Orchid by Tom Ford or Stella by Stella McCartney for ladies; Tabarome by Creed or π (Pi Neo) by Givenchy for guys. If you buy a box set, crack it open and wrap items individually to mask your embarrassingly obvious inclination toward a deal. But whether buying an eau de toilette or toiletries (don't gift toiletries), always ask for the store refund policy and/or obtain a gift receipt. This lets the recipient return your present and get what they really wanted in the first place.

... Unless the stores are closed

If you waited this long, you've really only got two options left: The Internet (thanks Al Gore) or corner-store cigars and scratch-and-wins. For some reason, not everybody appreciates the latter. Instead, use the series of tubes to find a gift you don't need to wait for in the mail. Magazine subscriptions, e-coupons for music and book downloads and getaway bookings are easy point-and-click buys and don't even require wrapping. Simply pen a note proclaiming your thoughtfulness, emphasize how your gift is so superior the recipient must wait to get it, and watch the joy spread across his or her face on Christmas morning.

Last-minute gifts you can make yourself

If ever there has been a year to give a homemade holiday gift, this is it. Budgets are tight. Gift-givers have to be more creative than ever if they want to delight their friends and family with something unusual.

Meanwhile, business is booming in the world of homemade crafts. Not only has scrapbooking launched an industry of its own, but the notion of do-it-yourself has produced thousands of new products, services, classes and ideas.

With all these choices, the question remains: What to give? Here are some ideas:

• **Aprons** are big this year, according to Kathy Rogers of Oak Park, Calif. These kitchen coverups are useful and they're easy to sew, even for novices.

"People are having fun with it; I've seen a lot of aprons with retro patterns," said Rogers, a fibre artist and teacher who is president of the California Art Education Association. "That seriously seems to be a very hot item."

Can't sew at all? Order a white cotton twill apron from the Bay Area-based Dharma Trading Company (dharmatrading.com). They start at around $7 US and can be dressed up with tie-dye, buttons, decals, fabric paint and just about anything else.

• Or try a **wreath**. Jenny Bosben, a Madison, Wis., art teacher, estimates she spends about $3 per wreath for a metal frame and some craft wire. Then she heads into her backyard to chop off a few pieces of arbor vitae, an evergreen shrub. If you don't have access to evergreens, boughs are available to buy at Christmas time.



If you're making gifts with children, try baked goods.

Just wrap the boughs securely onto the frame with the wire, overlapping so the stems don't show.

"You can add whatever you want: Holly berries, dried flowers from the backyard," said Bosben. "It's something people really enjoy because it's real and it smells good."

• **Homemade cards** are also popular this year, according to craft store buyers. Molly Heyn-DeVinaspre, a sculptor, photographer and art teacher in Boise, Idaho, creates stationary from crayons (see instructions above).

• If you're making gifts with children, try **baked goods**, said Laurie Nagus, who runs play groups at the Madison Waldorf School in Madison, Wis.

Nagus likes to give homemade fudge as a gift. She also makes shortbread every year for neighbours and friends. "We give it with a candle and a tiny bottle of wine," she said.

• Bosben also makes **ornaments** from a salt clay recipe that her mother used (see recipe at left). Baked hard, the ornaments can be painted and decorated. Salt clay renders the ornaments both rock-hard and unappetizing to the family dog. "The ones my mom made, they lasted forever," Bosben said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Holiday ornament recipe

INGREDIENTS:
- 1 cup flour
- 3/4 cup salt
- 1/4 cup cooking oil
- 1/2 cup water

METHOD:

1 Preheat oven to 350 F. In a bowl, mix flour, salt and oil with wooden spoon. Add water gradually. Shape, add hook for hanging from tree, and then bake for 1 to 2 hours, until ornaments are hard. Paint and decorate.

– JENNY BOSBEN RECIPE

Crayon Melt Stationary Set

MATERIALS:
- Electric fry pan
- Foil
- Original crayons (not washable)
- Card stock
- Envelopes
- Paper towels
- Hot pad or oven mitts

METHOD:

1 Line pan with foil. Turn on pan until hot enough to melt crayons. Peel paper off crayons. (If working with kids, have them use oven mitts to avoid burns.)

2 Melt or draw with the crayons on the foil until the desired look is achieved; thick pools of melted crayons end up creating interesting shapes.

3 Place paper on top of melted wax. Gently blot with paper towel to stick the wax onto the paper. Lift paper off and allow cooling time.

4 Fold in half to create card. Wipe excess wax off foil with paper towel and create another.

5 Package all of the cards with envelopes and tie a piece of yarn around everything.

– BY MOLLY HEYN-DE VINASPRE



Stocking stuffer
Where The Wild Things Are ornament, $19.99 at Hallmark. For more, go to hallmark.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide

Toys for boys



Spider-Man Zoom N Go ATV Racer, $14.99. Available at Walmart, Zellers and Toys R Us.



Power Rangers Eagle Guardian, $10.99. Comes in other animal assortments, including Lion, Wolf and Shark. Available exclusively at Toys R Us.



Ben 10 Alien Force Spidermonkey, $7.99. Each set includes two figures, an alien key to unlock body parts and an alien combo card. Spidermonkey comes with **Echo Echo**. Available at Walmart, Toys R Us and Zellers.





RC Camaro, $34.99. Available at Canadian Tire. For more, go to canadiantire.ca.



Kota & Pals Monty Rex dinosaur, $89.99, moves his head, tail and arms — and he walks too! Available at Walmart, Zellers and Toys R Us.





G.I. Joe Snake Eyes Ninja figure and **G.I. Joe Tough Trooper**, right, $29.99 each. Available at Walmart, Zellers and Toys R Us.



Helmet Heroes Police Officer, $39.99. Features colourful lights and a microphone so boys can hear themselves broadcast their adventure. Available at Walmart, Zellers and Toys R Us.



Green Toys Recycling Truck, $29.95, made from recycled plastic milk containers. Available at Indigo and Chapters stores across Canada. For more, go to chapters.indigo.ca.

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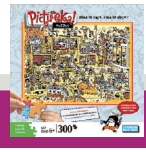
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Family fun
The Penguin, caveman and other characters come to life in this Pictureka! 300-piece puzzle, $7.99. Available at Walmart, Zellers and Toys R Us. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide

Home for the holidays



Slatkin oil warmer figurals, $14.50, and **fragrance oils,** $7.50 each. Available at Bath & Body Works stores across Canada. For more, go to bathandbodyworks.com.



12 Days of Christmas votive set, $29.99. These holiday berry-scented candles are available at Indigo and Chapters stores across Canada.



Leopard print glasses, $4.99 each. Available at HomeSense. For more, go to homesense.ca.



Snowman appetizer plates, $30 for a set of four. For more, go to pamperedchef.com or call 1-800-266-5562.

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Merry Merry salad plates, $10 each; **Merry Merry appetizer plates,** $9 each; **Merry Merry serving platter,** $32. All available at Pier 1 Imports. For more, go to pier1.ca.



PC Caspian mugs, $9.99 for four; and **PC Caspian dessert plates,** $9.99 for four. All by PC Home. For more, go to superstore.ca.



Stemless champagne glasses, $9.99, by PC Home. For more, go to superstore.ca.

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This year in fashion 2009

Hosted by Glen Baxter, a special edition of In Fashion reviews the memorable moments and events that shaped the world of fashion in 2009. Premieres Sunday on CTV. METRO NEWS SERVICE

Style



If the shoe fits ... the recipient

Need a last-minute gift idea for the fashionista in your life? Dazzle her with the The Red Shoe Lover's Cell Phone Holder. This bejeweled stand, adorned with fully-faceted crystals, fits most standard headsets and features a built-in grommet for a recharging cable. She will be head over heels for it! Available at The Shoe (thesource.ca) for $9.99.

METRO NEWS SERVICE

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Best and worst '09

Metro polled editors across our 100 editions worldwide to compile this list of who looked great and who didn't this year



Michelle Obama

Dubbed the first lady of fashion, Michelle Obama dazzled us with her sleeveless, strapless, and one-armed gowns, classic sheath dresses and creative accessories over the past year. She helped put budding designers on the map (i.e. Jason Wu) and showed off her modesty with old favourites like J. Crew. Not since Jackie O has the fashion world been so intrigued with the White House.

Best



Diane Kruger

The actress has always been an underground stunner, but she kicked the fashion up a notch while promoting Inglourious Basterds.



Amber Rose

Never mind that she seems to have pulled it together in recent months, Kanye West's girlfriend spent the majority of 2009 looking like one hot skintight legging-wearing mess.

Worst



Mariah Carey

Why our beloved diva insists on squeezing into dresses that are clearly a few sizes too small is beyond us. We wish she'd burn the Spanx and exhale normally.

Best & Worst



Lady Gaga

We loved: Her wild and crazy approach to fashion (see every outfit in her video for Bad Romance and her wardrobe at the MTV VMA awards).

We hated: Her wild and crazy approach to fashion (i.e. that puzzling bolero made of Kermit the frog stuffed animals and that weird hat made of deer antlers).



Ungaro president steps down

DESIGNER The president of foundering Paris-based label Emanuel Ungaro — who hired Hollywood star Lindsay Lohan last season in what critics decried as a desperate move to revive the flagging brand — has stepped down, the fashion house said in a statement last week.

Lebanese-born businessman Mounir Moufarrige is leaving "in order to devote more time to his other businesses, namely, in the watch and jewelry industry," the statement said.

A press officer for the Ungaro said Moufarrige, who joined the label in 2006, will continue to serve on its strategic committee as an adviser on an "as-needed basis."

Moufarrige has made a specialty out of reviving semi-dormant brands: His achievements include turning the Montblanc pen into a cult object and hiring then little-known designer Stella McCartney at Chloe, which has since become a hot label for the under-40s set.

Once favoured by Hollywood's elite, Ungaro had been bleeding money since its founder retired in 2004. However, Moufarrige struggled to turn the label around, and his attempts to appeal to younger consumers appeared to grow ever more desperate as the years ticked by.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



CHRISTOPHE ENA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mounir Mouffarige recently stepped down from his post as Emanuel Ungaro's CEO to devote more time to his other businesses.

Changes

- Ungaro vice-president Marie Fournier has been named general manager "to oversee all operations," according to a recent statement. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lively lights up Green Lantern
Gossip Girl actress Blake Lively is set to star in new comic book movie Green Lantern. The 22-year-old blonde star is being lined-up to play the love interest of the main character Hal Jordan — who is played by Ryan Reynold. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Entertainment



Baby Knoxville
It's a boy for Johnny Knoxville and girlfriend Naomi Nelson. The couple welcomed son Rocko Akira Clapp on Sunday in Los Angeles. The baby weighed in at 8 pounds.
PEOPLE.COM

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Gilliam creates imaginary world

The Imaginarium of **Doctor Parnassus**
Director: Terry Gilliam
Stars: Heath Ledger, Johnny Depp
Classification: PG
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕½

RICHARD CROUSE
for Metro Canada

As you may have guessed from the title, The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus is an odd movie. Directed by Terry Gilliam, it's the strange tale of a mysterious immortal who complicates his life by making deals with the devil.

Complicating Gilliam's life during production was the unexpected death of his star Heath Ledger but, the show, as they say, must go on and here we are after the untimely January 2008 passing of the young actor, with a completed film. How did Gilliam finish the movie? A new credit, A Film from Heath Ledger and Friends tells the tale.

Three of Ledger's buddies, Johnny Depp (seen dancing on a leaf!), Colin Farrell and Jude Law, stepped in to play "through the looking glass" versions of the late actor.

Set in present day London the film begins with a look at Doctor Parnassus' (Christopher Plummer) bizarre traveling show that offers people a chance to step through Dr.P's magical mirror into an alternate reality. He's selling imagination, but his gift of mind's eye manipulation came with a heavy price.

Eons before he made a trade with the devil (Tom Waits): Remarkable power in exchange for his first born daughter on her sixteenth birthday. That anniversary is now days away but with the help of a mysterious stranger named Tony (played by Ledger, Depp, Law and Farrell) and the magic mirror Dr. P just may be able to save her.



Actor Heath Ledger died unexpected during production of The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus.

The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus is more a piece of surrealist art than a traditional movie. Imagine watching a Salvador Dali painting come to life and you'll get the idea. Gilliam, who co-wrote the script as well as directed, has allowed his imagination to run riot.

While the story meanders to and fro he fills the screen with unforgettable images; Old Nick dangling Dr. P from the end of a branch or a multi-eyed hot air balloon shaped like a man's head or the ensemble of skirt wearing, dancing Bobbies. Visually it'll make your eyeballs do the Watusi.

The story, however, may leave some a bit baffled, but so what if it warps the brain a bit? The film oozes Gilliam's trademarked anarchic spirit — he might be the only filmmaker who could replace his leading man with three other actors and actually pull it off — and is the most original movie of the year.

On the web

- For movie trailers, photos and screen times — or to buy tickets — visit metronews.ca/movies.

It's Complicated uncommonly mature

It's **Complicated**
Director: Nancy Meyers
Stars: Meryl Streep, Alec Baldwin, Steve Martin
Classification: 14A
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada

REVIEW Writer/director Nancy Meyers (Something's Got To Give) is a specialist in romantic comedies about middle-aged women. It's a genre with a built in audience and normally few surprises.

However, there's something different about It's Complicated. This movie actually presents psychologically believable characters and doesn't offer easy happy endings. For a holiday release comedy, it is surprisingly well written despite the Hollywood fantasy elements.

Sure everyone in the movie is ridiculously rich and impossibly attractive, but if Meryl Streep and Alec Baldwin actually had children there probably wouldn't be a fugly kid in the family.

Meryl Streep stars as a divorcee whose youngest child just left for college. Just as she starts planting the seeds for a relationship with a charming architect (Steve Martin), Streep has a drunken rendezvous with her ex-husband (Alec Baldwin) that leads to an affair.

All the expected comic mix-ups and zany shenanigans follow, but what is a pleasant surprise is that they have genuine repercussions for the characters and nothing gets tidied up in an obvious way.

For the most part this is a lighthearted romp, but Nancy Meyers crafts her characters as believable human beings and there is a mature undercurrent of reality rarely found in this sort of movie.

Despite the clever screenplay, this is an actor's movie and Meyers cast the roles well.

Meryl Streep is her expected excellent self, getting plenty of laughs while still creating a three dimensional character. Steve Martin delivers the goods as always, but the real star is Alec Baldwin who steals every scene.

Baldwin has really come into his own as a comic actor in recent years as his burgeoning beer-belly and scotch n' cigars scarred voice began to overcome his leading man looks. It's Complicated might be a little too familiar to be considered a great movie, but it is uncommonly mature for the genre and should please the target audience.



Meryl Streep and Alec Baldwin star in It's Complicated.

- For It's Complicated trailers, photos and screen times — or to buy tickets — visit metronews.ca/movies.





Longoria launches fragrance

Eva Longoria is to launch her own fragrance. The Desperate Housewives actress has created a new scent with Falic Fashion Group and was keen to make something wearable and not overpowering. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Auction to sell Cher's home

PEOPLE Cher's six-bedroom Hawaii home overlooking the Pacific Ocean is set to be auctioned Jan. 18.

Concierge Auctions estimated the property with views of the Hualalai Golf Course at $8 million to $12 million US.

A website set up for the sale says the property has a main residence and five freestanding bungalows. Four have bedroom suites, and the fifth is a media bungalow with a bar.

Cosby to receive special award

PRIZE Bill Cosby will be the next recipient of the Marian Anderson Award.

He is to accept the award and $100,000 prize April 6 at the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia. The comedian, actor and educator is being honoured for his cultural impact as well as his work in encouraging academic achievement and calling for accountability in the black community.

It honours artists whose leadership benefits society. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fun from start to finish

Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law are perfect together in Sherlock Holmes

Sherlock Holmes

Director: Guy Ritchie
Stars: Robert Downey Jr., Jude Law
Classification: PG
Rating:

NED EHRBAR
for Metro Canada



Robert Downey Jr., left, and Jude Law stir up plenty of chemistry in Sherlock Holmes.

REVIEW Guy Ritchie's risky re-imagining of literature's most famous detective definitely pays off well, thanks in most part to the sheer force of charisma that is Robert Downey Jr.

As he proved earlier this year in the middling The Soloist, Downey can be great even when the movie around him fails to perform. Luckily, in Sherlock Holmes he doesn't have to.

The film takes all the strokes of genius and superhuman deductive skills usually attributed to Holmes and adds the psychological shortcomings that would naturally go with them. He can't venture out into public without obsessively clocking every odd behavior of his fellow Londoners.

Downey portrays all of this splendidly, as unhinged is one of his better looks. But Holmes is nothing without Watson, and under Ritchie's direction, Jude Law is better than he's been in years. The two are perfect together, stirring up enough chemistry to make Watson's fiancée (Kelly Reilly) feel like an unwanted distraction.

Unfortunately, most of Holmes' ticks are abandoned for the second half, when they get down to the business of unraveling the case at hand, the mysterious resurrection of convicted murderer Lord Blackwood (the menacing Mark Strong).

There are plenty of elaborate action sequences set throughout the grey, muddy, under-construction London, but all the loose ends tie up a bit too neatly in the end — except for those needed to tease a sequel. It's absolute fun from start to finish, but it would be nice if so much of the fun weren't front-loaded.

• For Sherlock Holmes photos, a trailer and screen times — or to buy tickets — visit metronews.ca/movies.



Unwind with the season's latest flicks

InFocus



Richard Crouse

metronews.ca/infocus

Movies and Boxing Day go together like turkey and stuffing.

While everyone is returning unwanted Christmas gifts or fighting bargain hunters at the mall it's the perfect time to relax and catch up on flicks you missed in the hectic ramp-up to the holidays.

The multiplexes are jammed with new movies at this time of year. Go see Disney's first hand drawn fairy tale in twenty years, The Princess and the Frog, for the beautiful animation Stay for the great songs and first ever African-American princess.

Also kid friendly is Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel, which sees the three furry singing stars find some competition from The Chipettes, an all girl chipmunk group lead by (the voice of) Drew Barrymore.

If singing rodents aren't your thing how about an all singing, all dancing movie from the usually oh-so-serious Daniel Day Lewis? The Oscar winner stars in Nine, a musical about a film director juggling relationships with his wife, mistress, muse, agent and mother all while wearing cool Italian suits.



Nine, starring Penelope Cruz, above, makes for some showy musical fun.

If twisty-turny relationships turn your crank but an overdose of Christmas carols has put you off music for the week, you may find some yuks in watching Steve Martin and Alec Baldwin fight over Meryl Streep in the comedy It's Complicated or the soon-to-be-divorced couple Hugh Grant and Sarah Jessica Parker enter the witness-protection program in Did You Hear About the Morgans?.

If you have time on your hands — or simply want a break from Christmas house guests — James Cameron's two-and-a-half-hour sci fi epic Avatar is the longest movie in current release.

Can't make the trip to the theatre? There's something on DVD or Blu-ray for everyone. For the kids there's Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince and G-Force.

"While everyone is returning unwanted Christmas gifts or fighting bargain hunters at the mall, it's the perfect time to relax and catch up flicks you missed in the hectic ramp-up to the holidays."

Once the tots have gone to bed and grandma has had an extra sherry or two check out Trailer Park Boys: Countdown to Liquor Day, Inglourious Basterds or The Hangover for some adult entertainment.

For the music lover in the house there's Taking Woodstock and the excellent guitar rock doc It Might Get Loud.

For the lovelorn, (500) Days of Summer should confirm that love can be fleeting, and for the romantics, Julie & Julia should verify that food always tastes better with someone you love.

Whether staying home or going out, there are plenty of options to help while away a lazy Boxing Day.

Jon & Kate most overexposed couple
Jon and Kate Gosselin have been named the most overexposed couple of the year, easily beating out Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie in a popeater.com poll. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Nine is not enough

Musical fails to make transition stage to the big screen

Nine
Director: Rob Marshall
Stars: Daniel Day-Lewis, Penelope Cruz
Classification: PG
Rating: ⊕⊕½

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada


Nine marks director Rob Marshall's second attempt to turn a lavish stage show into a big-screen showstopper.

REVIEW Based on a musical (which itself was based on Federico Fellini's classic film 8 ½), Nine marks director Rob Marshall's second attempt to turn a lavish stage show into a big-screen showstopper.

Well why not? After all, he found success with Chicago (which won the Best Picture Oscar in 2003) but unfortunately this Italian-set noodle only ends up al dente.

Daniel Day Lewis plays an admired filmmaker in the 1960s that flees Rome and the set of his latest picture at the outset of a midlife crisis. Paralyzed by a creative deadlock, his quandary is reflected in fantasy sequences as the auteur encounters the women in his life — his enduring wife (Marion Cotillard), mistress (Penelope Cruz), mother (Sophia Loren) and others played by the likes of Nicole Kidman and Kate Hudson.

While a song notably accompanies each female's appearance (and surprisingly, the cast can carry a tune) and is intended to reveal the filmmaker's internal struggle, most of the arrangements are still simply unremarkable with the possible exception of Be Italian, the movie's signature song (performed by Fergie of the Black Eyed Peas).

Marshall helps to compensate with a slick production, opulent sequences and a recurring chorus of scantily-clad dancers but without some fetching songs to support it, Nine does not add up to a momentous musical.

While a scrawny storyline only adds to the film's lack of luster, fans of musicals that are willing to accept the film for its surface glitter may be thrilled. For the rest of us … well, rent 8 ½ on DVD over the holidays to see what goes much better without singing.

• For Nine photos, a trailer and screen times — or to buy tickets — visit metronews.ca/movies

Director goes back in time for Victoria

The Young Victoria
Director: Jean-Marc Vallee
Stars: Emily Blunt, Rupert Friend
Classification: STC
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕

ADAM NAYMAN
for Metro Canada

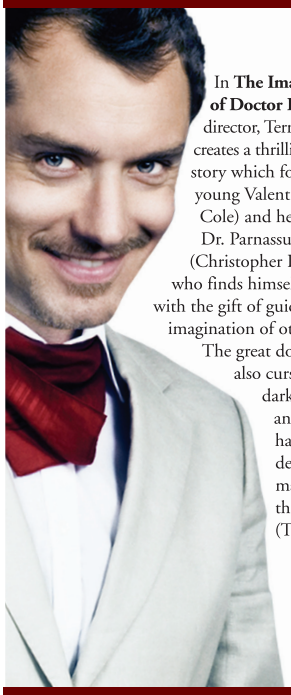
REVIEW It's a bit disappointing that Quebecois director Jean-Marc Vallee chose to follow up his ecstatic 2005 debut C.R.A.Z.Y. with a Golden Age melodrama. Why would such an unruly, contemporary talent willingly stuff himself into a period-piece corset?

That said, The Young Victoria, which stars Emily Blunt as the eponymous monarch and Rupert Friend as her ardent suitor Prince Albert, is perfectly acceptable filmmaking in the costume drama mode. As an examination of girl-in-a-gilded-cage melancholy, it's far more affecting than last year's similarly themed The Duchess (which seemed mostly like an excuse to dress Keira Knightley in a variety of fetching ensembles). Screenwriter Julian Fellowes frames the monarch not as an ascendant icon but a frustrated teenage girl, and it's no small compliment to say that the 26-year old Blunt comes off as credibly adolescent (including a few nicely played temper tantrums).

Vallee eschews the directorial pyrotechnics that marked C.R.A.Z.Y., but still has some trouble finding an appropriately stately pace: The introductions of several major characters and their various roles in palace intrigue (most of it revolving around the 18-year-old queen's ability to rule) feel rushed. Eventually, the film settles into a gauzy, romantic groove, building to a climax that feels emotionally authentic even as it plays rather fast and loose with the historical record.

The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus

Actors **Depp**, **Law** and **Farrell** Ensure **Ledger's** Final Performance Be Shared

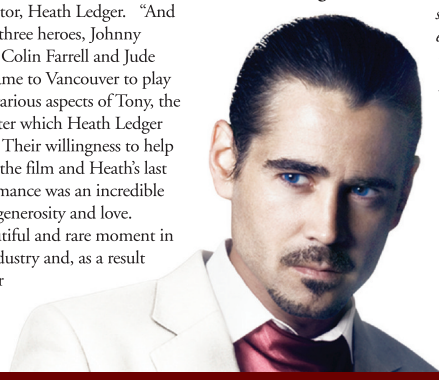


In **The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus** director, Terry Gilliam creates a thrilling, fantasy story which follows young Valentina (Lily Cole) and her father Dr. Parnassus (Christopher Plummer) who finds himself blessed with the gift of guiding the imagination of others. The great doctor is also cursed with a dark secret and a haunting deal he made with the devil (Tom Waits).

The film is a mystifying exploration with an award-winning cast, Heath Ledger, Johnny Depp, Colin Farrell and Jude Law starring as the enigmatic 'Tony' in this captivating story in a race against time.

Production on film **THE IMAGINARIUM OF DOCTOR PARNASSUS** was halted by the sudden passing of lead actor, Heath Ledger. "And so the three heroes, Johnny Depp, Colin Farrell and Jude Law came to Vancouver to play these various aspects of Tony, the character which Heath Ledger began. Their willingness to help rescue the film and Heath's last performance was an incredible act of generosity and love. A beautiful and rare moment in our industry and, as a result of their involvement, the film is even more special: it's more surprising; it's become funnier. All in all, it's a bit more magical," affectionately exclaims Gilliam.

For the first time, the actors **Johnny Depp**, **Jude Law** and **Colin Farrell** speak out about the film, their admiration for director, Terry Gilliam and actor, **Heath Ledger**.



Johnny Depp remembers *"… Heath is a marvel, Christopher Plummer beyond anything he's ever done, Waits as the Devil is a God, Lily Cole and Andrew Garfield, the very foundation, are spectacular, Verne Troyer simply kicks ass and as for my other cohorts, Colin Farrell and Jude Law, they most certainly did Master Ledger very proud, I salute them. .. Though the circumstances of my involvement are extremely heart-rending and unbelievably sad, I feel privileged to have been asked aboard to stand in on behalf of dear Heath."*

"… To help finish his final piece of work was a tribute I felt compelled to make. To help Terry finish his film was an honour paid to a man I adore…" recalls **Jude Law**.

"… one of cinemas finest actors and most generous of men. It will be this sense of love amidst the sadness I will remember most. Such a gift and an honor, from Heath, to be a part of the trail that he left behind. RIP Heath Ledger x." **Colin Farrell**.

Ledger will be forever immortalized on the silver screen.



IN THEATRES CHRISTMAS DAY

Rapper T.I. released from jail

T.I. has been released from prison in Arkansas and is being moved to a halfway house in Georgia, The Associated Press reports. The rapper, whose real name is Clifford Harris Jr., was released from jail Tuesday. TVGUIDE.COM

Presents to purchase yourself

Suggestions on how to spend your holiday cash

SoundCheck



Call it Black Saturday. Armed with the Christmas cash found under the tree, many millions of Canadians will lose their minds on Boxing Day in a shopping frenzy as they rush out to purchase all the stuff they really wanted for the holidays. Sure, we could save this money —hey, the RRSP deadline is just over two months away — but what's the fun in that? Here are some suggestions:

A Good CD Box Set: Virtually any song ever recorded is just a mouse click away, but you can't download the kind of goodness that you get in a carefully-compiled box set. If your budget affords it, it's almost always better to go with the deluxe edition. Recommendations: AC/DC's Backtracks (Standard: $40, deluxe: $200); the recent Beatles re-releases (Go with the In Mono set over the stereo collection for the packaging alone. It's worth the $350 or so); and the Pixies Minotaur, which, at two feet tall, is one of the most ambitious — and expensive — rock boxes ever produced ($500 and up. Way up).

A New Deluxe Edition Re-release of an Old Album: If box set is on the dear side, why not opt for an expanded and enhanced version of an older record? Recommendations: The Legacy edition of Pearl Jam's Ten (same remix/remaster but without all the extra pieces in the other versions: about $20), U2's Limited Edition Box Set of The Unforgettable Fire (a decent value at about $50).





Far left: AC/DC's Backtracks deluxe edition. Left: Pearl Jam's Ten (Deluxe edition).

"Millions of Canadians will lose their minds on Boxing Day in a shopping frenzy as they rush out to purchase the stuff they really wanted for the holidays."

A Turntable: This is what I'm shopping for today. I need a replacement for my venerable Akai belt-drive, which has served me well since the '70s. Turntables were an endangered species for a while, but with vinyl making such a comeback, they've risen from the dead. Recommendations: A USB turntable like the ION Profile that can help you turn those old records into MP3s ($90 and up); a Technics SL-1200 series machine, the DJ's favourite and rumoured to be going out of production in 2010. ($700 and up. Make sure you shop around).



With vinyl making a comeback, ION Profile's USB turntable is the perfect post-Christmas gift for yourself.

Rock Band/Guitar Hero/Band Hero: Competition between games and platforms means that being a virtual rock star remains very affordable. Recommendations: The Beatles edition of Rock Band brought this kind of entertainment to a whole new level. (Prices vary, but I've seen the Rock Band Special Value edition —which includes the Beatles game — selling for about $100).

The Ongoing History Of New Music can be heard on stations across Canada. Read more at ongoinghistory.com and exploremusic.com





No payday in court for disappointed Star Trek fan
An appeals court ruling Tuesday in New York says Ted Moustakis wasn't promised a one-of-a-kind piece when he paid $11,400 at a 2006 auction for a uniform from the wardrobe of the character Data from Star Trek: The Next Generation. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

2009: The year of celebrity deaths

Year in Review

BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

Headliners in life and death, the many stars who died this past year were a sure hit to the Hollywood community.

While some were shrouded in controversy, and others premature accidents, their deaths permeated international media, marking one last moment in the limelight.

Here, Metro looks back at the names-in-lights that flickered out in 2009.

MICHAEL JACKSON

When rumors began to circulate on June 25 that Michael Jackson went into cardiac arrest at his home, the whole world speculated whether the King of Pop was hanging up his crown for good.

It would only be hours before the 50-year-old pop star's death was confirmed, an event that graced the front pages of newspapers everywhere and brought the Internet to a crawl.

Autopsies concluded homicide prompted by a deadly drug combination caused Jackson's death, a final puzzling piece in the troubled artist's life.



FARRAH FAWCETT

Surely the year's darkest day for the celebrity world, June 25 also saw the death of actress and sex symbol Farrah Fawcett at 62.

Despite coming to fame as one of the original Charlie's Angels and winning several Golden Globes and Emmy awards, her cultural influence extended well beyond acting. Fawcett's flipped-out hairstyle inspired scores of women; her iconic pinup poster, countless men.

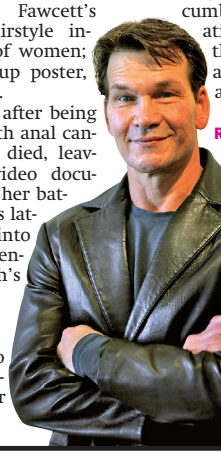


Three years after being diagnosed with anal cancer, Fawcett died, leaving behind video documentation of her battle, which was later turned into the documentary Farrah's Story.

PATRICK SWAYZE

Cancer also claimed celebrated actor Patrick Swayze on Sept. 14, about one month after his 57th birthday. Swayze chasséd his way into the spotlight with his role as a dance instructor in the 1987 film Dirty Dancing, which inspired a stage musical, reality TV show and video game.

His co-starring role in the 1990 film Ghost earned him respect as a serious actor, which influenced his future stage and screen roles. Swayze finally succumbed to pancreatic cancer less than two years after being diagnosed.



NATASHA RICHARDSON

After an accidental fall and resulting head injury during a skiing lesson at a Mont Tremblant, Que., resort, English actress Natasha Richardson died on March 14 at 45. Daughter of famed actress Vanessa Redgrave and British new wave auteur Tony Richardson, and wife of actor Liam Neeson, Richardson was a respected actress in her own right. A performer on stage and screen, she was praised for her roles in Gothic, The Handmaid's Tale, Nell and Widows' Peak.



Notable 2009 celebrity deaths

- Mar. 22 – Jade Goody, 27, reality TV star (cancer)
- April 25 – Bea Arthur, 86, actress (cancer)
- June 3 – David Carradine, 72, actor (autoerotic asphyxiation)
- June 28 – Billy Mays, 50, TV pitchman (heart disease)
- July 17 — Walter Cronkite, 92, broadcaster (cerebral vascular disease)
- Aug. 6 – John Hughes, 59, filmmaker (heart failure)
- Aug. 28 – Adam (DJ AM) Goldstein, 36, disc jockey (accidental drug overdose)
- Sept. 16 – Mary Travers, 70, singer, Peter Paul & Mary (chemotherapy complications)
- Oct. 10 – Stephen Gately, 33, singer, Boyzone (natural causes)
- Dec. 20 — Brittany Murphy, 32, actress (cardiac arrest)

Weekdays @ 9pm
101.3 THE BOUNCE
Interactive NINE@9
For December 23rd
9 David Guetta ft Akon - Sexy Chick
8 Drake FT Kevin Cossom - I Get Paper
7 Faber Drive - Give Him Up
6 Hedley - Don't Talk To Strangers
5 Aleesia - Bubble Gum
4 Jason Derulo - In My Head
3 Down With Webster - Rich Girl$
2 Lady Gaga - Bad Romance
1 Ke$ha - Tik Tok
WE WANT YOU!
You could guest host the Interactive NINE@9 with Kid Craig.
kidcraig@1013thebounce.com
1013 THEBOUNCE.com

HA	H	D	B	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
12/24/09 primetime	31	31	31 ABC	News Center 5	World News	Holiday Lights		Prep- Landing	The Middle	Modern Family	Cougar Town	Grey's Anat.
	7	7	7 ASN	*Chasing Christmas* (2005, Drama) Tom Arnold.				*Santa Baby* (2006, Comedy) Jenny McCarthy, Ivan Sergei.				Atlantis
	11	11	11 CBC	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	*Miracle on 34th Street* ★★★★ (1947, Fantasy)				CBC News: The National		The Hour
	2	2	2 CBC-F	Pyramide (SC)	Union-force	*Sur les traces du Père Noël 2* ★★ (2002, Comédie) (SC)				Studio 12 (N) (SC)		Le Téléjournal
	32	32	32 CBS	WBZ News (N)	Evening News	Wheel Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	CSI: NY "Greater Good"		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		The Mentalist
	69	69	69 CFTM	TVA nouvelles		*Maman, j'ai encore raté l'avion* ★★ (1992, Comédie) Macaulay Culkin.				Les Anges de la rénovation		Rénovation
	6	6	6 CIHF	Entertainment	ET Canada	*The Road to Christmas* (2006, Comedy) Jennifer Grey.				Mall Santa		Bethlehem
	9	9	9 CJCH	Corner Gas	Degrassi: TNG	*It's a Wonderful Life* ★★★★ (1946, Comedy-Drama) James Stewart, Donna Reed. (DVS)						CTV News
	10	10	10 ELTV	(6) Holy Redeemer Carol Service				Podium TV		Community Matters		
	36	36	36 FOX	Seinfeld	The Simpsons	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Bones (HDTV PA)		Fringe (HDTV PA)		Fox First
	12	12	12 NBC	News (N)	NBC News	Access H.	Extra (N)	*It's a Wonderful Life* ★★★★ (1946, Comedy-Drama), Donna Reed (DVS)				
	29	29	29 NW	Power & Politics		Princess Diana		The World of Haute Couture		CBC News: The National		Princesses
	4	4	4 PBS-B	PBS NewsHour (N)		Greater Boston	Basic Black	L.A. Holiday Celebration 2009		Christmas With Mormon		Christmas
	35	35	35 PBS-D	PBS NewsHour (N)		Business Rpt.	Worldfocus	Faith Hill, Joy to the World		Christmas With Mormon		Holiday Pops
	68	68	68 TQS	Guerre clans	Le Mur	Smile TV (SC)	Criss Angel	La Guerre des clans (SC)				
news	23	96	96 BNN	Business News	Headline	Market Call Tonight		GetConnected	Market Call	Squeeze Play		Business News
	18	18	18 CNN	Situation Room-Wolf Blitzer		CNN Tonight (N)		Campbell Brown (N)		Larry King Live (N)		Cooper 360
sports	54	54	54 GOLF	Golf Central	Big Break Disney Golf (HDTV)		Big Break Disney Golf (HDTV)		Big Break Disney Golf (HDTV)		Big Break Disney Golf (HDTV)	
	52	52	52 RSE	Sportsnet Connected		Reflections The year in sports.		Plays of Year	Perfect 10	PartyPoker.net		Sportsnet Con.
	55	55	55 SCOR	Gerry Dee	Score Today	Top 50 Plays of the Year		Cabbie's Top	Court Cuts	Amazing Hits	Gerry Dee	Score Now
	45	45	45 SPD	(6) Barrett-Jackson Automobile Auction From Las Vegas.								
	53	53	53 TSN	Off the Record	SportsCentre	SportsCentre: Year in Review		30 for 30		Sid le Kid vs. Alex le Grand		SportsCentre
family	43	43	43 FAM	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Sonny Chance	Zack & Cody	Overruled!	Han. Montana	Wizards-Place	Latest Buzz	Ned's School
	44	44	44 TOON	*Gotta Catch Santa Claus*		The Legend of Frosty the Snowman Ice skate.				Futurama	King of the Hill	*Batman Return*
	26	26	26 TREE	Max & Ruby	Toot & Puddle: Christmas		Care Bears	Care Bears	Care Bears	Little Bear	Toopy & Binoo	Horton Hears
	27	27	27 YTV	The Nutcracker		Amer. Funniest Home Videos		Amer. Funniest Home Videos		Mystery Hnt.	Mon. Warriors	Fries That?
cable variety	16	16	16 A&E	The First 48 (HDTV)		The First 48 (HDTV)		The First 48		The First 48 (HDTV)		The First 48
	70	70	70 APTN	APTN National News (N)		Don Burnstick Comedy		Wolf Canyon	Urban Indian	*True Heart* ★★ (1997, Adventure)		
	50	50	50 BET	Sister, Sister	Sister, Sister	Sister, Sister	Sister, Sister	Sister, Sister	Sister, Sister	*The Cookout* ★ (2004, Comedy) Ja Rule.		
	37	37	37 BRVO	Wind at My Back		Trans-Siberian Orchestra		Johnny Cash Christmas		*The Man Who Saved Christmas* (2002)		
	25	25	25 CMT	Paul Brandt's Christmas		Faith Hill, Joy to the World		Reba	Reba	According-Jim	According-Jim	Home Improve.
	49	49	49 COM	Corner Gas	Jon Dore Show	Colbert Christmas: Gift		Name Is Earl	Name Is Earl	The Simpsons	South Park	Jeff Dunham
	153	153	153 COURT	Truth, Duty, Valour		Situation Critical		Cops Uncut	Dumb Criminal	Psychic Detect	Homicide File	Critical
	38	38	38 DISC	Canada's Worst Driver		Canada's Worst Driver		Canada's Worst Driver		Canada's Worst Driver		Worst Driver
	34	48	48 HGTV	Decked for the Holidays		Design Inc. Holiday		Sarah's Holiday Party		Carter Comes Home		Holiday Ideas
	46	46	46 HIST	Underworld Histories		Ice Road Truckers		Ancient Discoveries		Underworld Histories		After People
	17	17	17 MM	Make It or Break It		Degrassi: TNG	Degrassi: TNG	MuchNews: Top Shockers '09		*Paradise City: Degrassi Goes Hollywood*		
	19	19	19 MMM	Gene Simmons	Gene Simmons	Ranked!		VH1 Divas				Entourage
	201	201	201 M1	(6:30) *Bolt* (2008)		(8:15) *The Perfect Holiday* ★ (2007, Romance)				*Fred Claus* ★★ (2007, Comedy)		
	48	23	23 OLN	Mantracker		Ghost Hunters		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman		Ghost Hunters
	51	51	51 PEACH	The Office	Name Is Earl	Family Guy	Family Guy	House-Payne	House-Payne	Law & Order: SVU		*Mighty Ducks*
	206	206	206 PIX	(6:50) *The Gospel of John* ★★ (2003, Drama) Henry Ian Cusick, Daniel Kash.						*Godspell* ★★★ (1973, Musical)		
	67	67	67 RDI	RDI monde	RDI économie	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI économie
	39	39	39 SHOW	*His and Her Christmas* (2005, Comedy-Drama)				*Christmas Caper* (2007, Comedy-Drama)				*Christmas*
	40	40	40 SLICE	Skin Deep	Skin Deep	Rich Bride, Poor Bride		X-Weighted "Hugh"		X-Weighted		X-Weighted
	47	47	47 SPACE	*Star Wars: Episode II -- Attack of the Clones* ★★ (2002, Science Fiction)						*Star Wars: Episode III -- Revenge of the Sith*		
	14	14	14 SPIKE	*Star Wars IV: A New Hope* ★★★★ (1977, Science Fiction) Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher.						*Star Wars V: The Empire Strikes Back* (1980)		
	57	98	98 STAR	etalk	TMZ (N)	Look-A-Like	TMZ	The Ellen DeGeneres Show		The View (HDTV) (N)		Dr. Oz Show
	21	21	21 TLC	Chainsaw Ice Sculptors		Heavy Haulers (HDTV)		Little Chocolatiers		World Chocolate		BBQ Pit
	56	34	34 TROP	Bob & Doug	Bob & Doug	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	The Outer Limits		ET Canada	TV Made, Do It	Family Guy
	20	20	20 TV5	Que.-champion	Journal de Fr2	La Vie est un cirque		Petits meurtres en famille			*Drôle de Noël*	
	28	28	28 V	Jozi-H (DVS)		Murder, She Wrote		On the Buses	Bless-Father	*Borrowed Hearts* (1997, Drama) Roma Downey.		
	60	97	97 VIVA	Da Vinci's Inquest		Cold Case "Revenge"		Missing "Try Again"		The Closer "Dumb Luck"		Cold Case
	22	22	22 W	Maxed Out	Grocery Bag	*Silent Night* (2002, Drama) Linda Hamilton, Matthew Harbour.				*Me and Luke* (2006, Drama) Kristopher Turner.		
	251	251	251 WGN	WGN Evening News		Two/Half Men	Family Guy	The Vampire Diaries		Supernatural (HDTV)		WGN News

critics' corner

Miracle on 34th Street
In this 1947 classic, Edmund Gwenn stars as a Macy's Santa who gets into trouble when he claims he's the real Kriss Kringle. In a city full of impostors, he finds no one — not even a little girl (Natalie Wood) — willing to believe in him. With skeptics ridiculing him at every turn, Kringle has no choice but to take his case to court. Only one young lawyer has enough faith to defend him. Maureen O'Hara and John Payne also star in the Academy Award winner. 8 PM on CBC



It's a Wonderful Life
You know the story: Small-town guy George Bailey defers one big dream after another to stay home, marry local girl and run family business. Facing financial ruin, he's pulled from suicidal despair by an angel who shows him what a terrible place the world would be if he'd never lived. Hey, his small life made a pretty big impact after all! 8 PM on CJCH; 9 PM on NBC

Christmas at the Cathedral: Beacon of Hope
The Most Rev. Paul J. Swain, bishop of the Diocese of Sioux Falls, S.D., delivers the message and Christmas blessing from St. Joseph Cathedral in a music-filled event featuring the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra, the St. Joseph Cathedral Choir and Men's Schola, tenor Scott Piper, pianist Paul Sanchez, a multicultural children's choir, and more. 12:35 AM on CBS

Court blocks Boy George appearance

A British court has blocked an attempt by former Culture Club singer Boy George to appear on a reality television show. The 48-year-old had hoped to appear on Channel 4's ``Celebrity Big Brother'' despite being on probation for assaulting a male escort. THE ASSOCIATED PRESSS

Arkells tops Graham's musical list

GRAHAM ROCKINGHAM
for Metro Canada

1. THE ARKELLS, JACKSON SQUARE (DINE ALONE): This album was actually released late in 2008, but few paid attention until this year when the singles Oh the Boss is Coming and The Ballad of Hugo Chavez made the rock airways. This is an extraordinary debut album by the Hamilton-based band that merges catchy, high-energy hooks with intelligent lyrics. Tracks like Champagne Socialist and John Lennon in 67 leave the Arkells a cut above everyone else right now. And a year of steady touring has forged a fiery live act that will win over any audience.

2. ALEXISONFIRE, OLD CROWS/YOUNG CARDINALS (DINE ALONE): Alexisonfire had already demonstrated strong instrumental chops and a strong sense of lyrical purpose. All it needed was to tone down the screamo vocals and delve into their rock roots. They did all this and more on their fourth album. It all comes together on tracks like The Northern, where the band incorporates the gospel standard Roll Jordan Roll into the chorus, and Emerald Street, where George Pettit shows a journalist's eye for composition

3. LEE HARVEY OSMOND, QUIET EVIL (LATENT): A collective effort that with representation from the Cowboy Junkies, the Skydiggers, Junkhouse that sprang from a Michael Timmins project to musically chronicle the assassination of JFK. The group accomplishes the task in brilliant form in the track, Parkland, named after the Dallas hospital in which the president was pronounced dead. Frontman Tom Wilson describes this deeply dark, sometimes frightening, music as "acid folk."

4. METRIC, FANTASIES (METRIC MUSIC): This album would make the list simply for asking the "would you rather be The Beatles or the Rolling Stones?" But there are 10 solid tracks on this album, including Help I'm Alive. Emily Haines' songwriting keeps getting stronger. It's difficult to understand how this album didn't win the Polaris Prize. Metric, it seems, has become too popular for the indie-addled judges

5. TRAGICALLY HIP, WE ARE THE SAME (UNIVERSAL): We should never take this band for granted. After more than 20 years of recording the truest form of Canadian rock in existence, the Hip pulls together one of their most ambitious projects to date. And all of the tracks fit in comfortably with the rest of the band's catalogue.



Bryan picks Plaskett as best

BRYAN BORZYKOWSKI
for Metro Canada



Metro music reviewer Bryan Borzykowski picks Joel Plaskett's Three as one of the best Canadian albums of the year.

1. JOEL PLASKETT THREE (MAPLEMUSIC/UNIVERSAL): This seminal East Coast rocker has created a lot of good music over the years, but Three is easily his most ambitious effort yet. It should have been a mess — a triple disc, 27-song effort has a lot of potential to go wrong — but nearly every track here is as inspiring as the next. Partnering with Rose Cousins and Ana Egge, who provided stunning harmonies, was genius, while the infectious folk melodies are classic Plaskett.

2. ALEXISONFIRE, OLD CROWS/YOUNG CARDINALS (DINE ALONE): I've never liked Alexisonfire. Their aggressive yells and uneven songwriting didn't do much for me — that is until I heard their fourth disc Old Crows/Young Cardinals. On this record the group has, without question, found their voice. They've discovered the perfect balance between George Pettit's loud, guttural yells and Dallas Green's soaring melodic vocals. The songs are incredibly contagious, especially single Young Cardinals.

3. CHARLES SPEARIN THE HAPPINESS PROJECT (ARTS & CRAFTS/EMI): You know Charles Spearin as the multi-instrumentalist from Do May Say Think and Broken Social Scene, but the artist's most inventive work has to be The Happiness Project. On this record, Spearin interviewed people from his community and set their words to sounds. Horn blasts follow a woman's natural talking melodies on the track Mrs. Morris, while a jazz band plays around with a little girl's words on Vittoria. It's experimental and accessible, but better yet it's passionate, inspiring and a beautiful ode to Spearin's neighbourhood.

4. HANDSOME FURS FACE CONTROL (SUB POP/OUTSIDE): Wolf Parade is one of the more popular indie acts to come out of Canada, but it's the members' side projects that should be front and centre. Handsome Furs is the brainchild of Wolf Parade's guitarist Dan Boeckner and his wife Alexei Perry — and the buzz is definitely competing with his other group. The duo's second disc is a gorgeous collection of gritty synth-heavy rock.

5. K'NAAN TROUBADOR (A&M/UNIVERSAL): Canadians have known about K'naan — the Somalia-born, Toronto-based rapper — since his fantastic debut in 2006. But, it was this year that the rest of the world finally discovered Keinan Abdi Warsame. That's thanks to his incredible sophomore record Troubador — which blends hip-hop and everything else. It's filled with catchy hooks, but it's the subject matter that makes this a memorable effort.



This week's new releases are highlighted in pink.

Screen Times

THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM FRI., DEC. 25 TO THURS., JAN. 1. TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. COMPLETE LISTINGS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT METRONEWS.CA/MOVIES.

m.metronews.ca

Scan this barcode for more Movies on your smartphone.
Learn how to scan the barcode with the instructions at the top of pg 3



After much anticipation, Avatar was released last week to a strong box office response.

HALIFAX

BAYERS LAKE
190 Chain Lake Dr., Bayers Lake
902-876-4800

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (G) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 4:20-4:30-6:55-9:15 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 11:45-12:15-1:15-3:30-4:30-7-9:15
Avatar 3D (PG) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 4-4:45-8-8:45 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 11:30-1-3:10-6-6:45-9:45-10:20
The Blind Side (PG) Dolby Stereo Fri 3:50-7:05-10:05 Dolby Stereo Sat-Thu 12:10-3:40-6:40-9:40
Did You Hear About the Morgans? (PG) Dolby Stereo, No Passes Fri 4:10-6:50-9:45 Dolby Stereo, No Passes Sat-Thu 12:40-3:50-6:50-9:45
Disney's A Christmas Carol (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri 4:05-9:30-9:50 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12:20-2:55-5:15-7:30-9:50
The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri 4:40-7:25-10:05 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12:30-3:45-6:40-10:15
Invictus (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri 4-7-10:05 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 11:55-3:20-6:45-9:55
It's Complicated (PG) No Passes Fri 4:10-4:20-6:40-7:10-9:30-10:05 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 12:20-12:35-3:30-3:45-6:40-6:50-9:30-10:05
Precious: Based on the Novel ``Push'' by Sapphire (14) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri 4:20-7:20-10:10 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12:25-3:45-7:15-10:25
The Princess and the Frog (G) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri 4:35-7-9:30 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12:35-3:55-6:45-9:30
Sherlock Holmes (PG) Stadium Seating, No Passes, Dolby Stereo Fri 4:10-4:20-6:40-6:55-7:20-9:35-9:45-10:10 Stadium Seating, No Passes, Dolby Stereo Sat-Thu 12-12:20-3:20-3:40-6:30-6:45-7:15-9:45-10-10:15
The Twilight Saga: New Moon (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri 4:05-6:55-9:45 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 11:45-3-6:15-9:45
Up in the Air (14) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 4:20-7:05-9:40 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12:15-3:35-7-10:05

IMAX
190 Chain Lake Dr., Bayers Lake
902-876-4800

Avatar: An IMAX 3D Experience (PG) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 4:30-8:30 Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12-3:35-7-10:30

OXFORD THEATRE
6408 Quinpool Rd.
902-423-7488

The Young Victoria (STC) Fri 7-9:30 Sat-Thu 2-4:30-7-9:30

PARK LANE
5657 Spring Garden Rd.
902-423-4860

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (G) No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 3-6:20-9 No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12:30-3-6:20-9
Avatar (PG) No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 3:30-7-10:30 No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat 12-3:30-7-10:30 Stadium Seating Sun-Thu 12-3:30-7-10:30
Did You Hear About the Morgans? (PG) Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 4:30-7:30-10:20 Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat 1:30-4:30-7:30-10:20 Stadium Seating Sun-Thu 1:30-4:30-7:30-10:20
Invictus (PG) Stadium Seating Fri 3:35-7:10-10:10 Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12:35-3:35-7:10-10:10
It's Complicated (PG) No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 4-6:40-9:30 No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 1-4-6:40-9:30
Nine (STC) Stadium Seating Fri 3:15-6:30-9:15 Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12:15-3:15-6:30-9:15
Sherlock Holmes (PG) No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 3:45-6:50-10 No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12:45-3:45-6:50-10
Up in the Air (14) No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 4:15-7:20-9:50 No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 1:15-4:15-7:20-9:50

LOWER SACKVILLE

LOWER SACKVILLE
760 Sackville Dr., Downsview Plaza
902-869-2022

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (G) Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 6:50-9 Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 12:15-2:20-4:40-6:50-9
Avatar (PG) Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 8 Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat 12:30-4:30-8 Stadium Seating Sun-Thu 12:30-4:30-8
Did You Hear About the Morgans? (PG) Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 7:20-9:40 Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat 1:15-4:15-7:20-9:40 Stadium Seating Sun-Thu 1:15-4:15-7:20-9:40
It's Complicated (PG) Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 6:40-9:25 Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 12:50-3:30-6:40-9:25
The Princess and the Frog (G) Stadium Seating Fri 7:15-9:30 Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12-2:10-4:50-7:15-9:30
Sherlock Holmes (PG) Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 7-9:50 Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 1-4-7-9:50
Up in the Air (14) Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 6:30-9:10 Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 1-3:30-6:30-9:10

DARTMOUTH

DARTMOUTH CROSSING
145 Shubie Dr., Dartmouth Crossing
902-481-3251

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 3:20-4:20-6:40-9:10 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 11:10-12:45-1:40-3:20-4:20-6:40-9:10
Avatar 3D (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 3-4:30-7:45-9 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 11-12-2:30-3:45-6:15-7:45-9:55 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 11-12-2:30-3:45-6:15-7:45-9:55
The Blind Side (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 7:15-10:15
Did You Hear About the Morgans? (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 3:50-6:35-9:20 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Sun 12:30-3:15-6:35-9:20 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 12:30-3:15-6:35-9:20
Disney's A Christmas Carol (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 4:35-7:35-10:10 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 1:15-4:35-7:35-10:10
Invictus (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 3:15-6:20-9:35 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 11:15-2:45-6:20-9:35
It's Complicated (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 3:40-6:45-9:45 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 11:40-2:55-6:45-9:45
Nine (STC) No Passes, Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 3-6:25-9:30 No Passes, Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 11:45-3-6:25-9:30
The Princess and the Frog (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 4:10-7:20-9:50 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 11:30-2:10-4:45-7:20-9:50
Sherlock Holmes (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 3:30-6:55-10:05 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 12:15-3:30-6:55-10:05
Up in the Air (14) Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri 4-7:30-10:20 Dolby Stereo Digital, No Passes, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 1-4-7:30-10:20

TRURO

TRURO
20 Treaty Trail, Millbrook
902-895-8020

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (G) Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 6:50-9 Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 12-2:20-6:50-9
Avatar (PG) Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 8 Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Sun 12:30-4:15-8 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 12:30-4:15-8
Did You Hear About the Morgans? (PG) Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 7:10-9:40 Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 12:40-3-7:10-9:40
It's Complicated (PG) Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 6:30-9:10 Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 12:40-3:25-6:30-9:10
The Princess and the Frog (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 7-9:20 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Thu 12:10-2:30-7-9:20
Sherlock Holmes (PG) Stadium Seating Fri 6:45-9:30 No Passes Sat-Thu 12:20-3:15-6:45-9:30
Up in the Air (14) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 6:35-9:10 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Thu 12:15-3:05-6:35-9:25

BRIDGEWATER

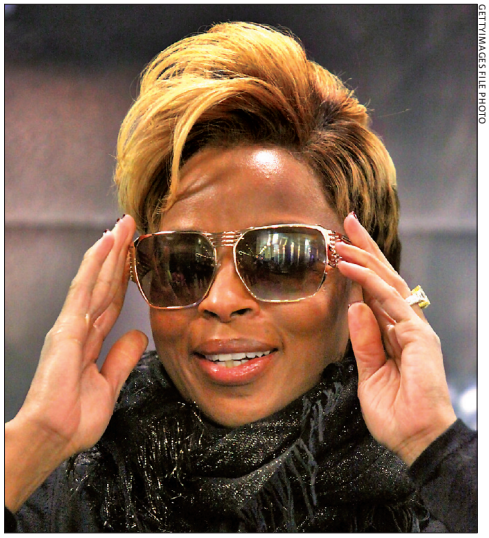
BRIDGEWATER
349 Lahave St., 902-527-4020

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (G) No Passes Fri 6:30-8:40 No Passes Sat-Thu 2-4:15-6:30-8:40
Avatar (PG) No Passes Fri 8 No Passes Sat 1-4:30-8 Sun-Thu 1-4:30-8
Did You Hear About the Morgans? (PG) No Passes Fri 6:40-9:10 No Passes Sat 1:20-3:45-6:40-9:10 Sun-Thu 1:20-3:45-6:40-9:10
It's Complicated (PG) No Passes Fri 7:10-9:55 No Passes Sat-Thu 1:40-4:25-7:10-9:55
The Princess and the Frog (G) Fri 6:45-9:05 Sat-Thu 1:30-3:50-6:45-9:05
Sherlock Holmes (PG) No Passes Fri 7-9:50 No Passes Sat-Thu 1:15-4:05-7-9:50
Up in the Air (14) No Passes Fri 6:50-9:25 No Passes Sat-Thu 1:50-4:20-6:50-9:25



Y and R star's surrogate has baby

With the help of a surrogate, soap star Michelle Stafford has become a mom. The Young and the Restless star welcomed daughter Natalia Scout Lee on Monday, her rep tells People. **POPEATER.COM**



GETTY IMAGES FILE PHOTO

Mary J. Blige says performing her hits is like therapy.

Blige talks about being a crybaby

Mary J. Blige, who is known as the "queen of hip-hop soul," says she's kept her lofty title because she stays in tune with what younger audiences want to hear.

In a recent interview, Blige — who has won nine Grammy Awards since her debut in 1992 — talked about R&B music, recording a jazz album — and being a crybaby.

Q Would you say that you're a sensitive person?

A I would say that I'm a very sensitive person.

Q Are you crying about the same things that you cried about earlier in your career?

A I think I cry about different things now. I cry because I want to be better than this. I want to continue to grow so, you know, I have to give myself a break. I'm my worst critic. I'm the hardest person on me. I've been like that forever, but I've just learned to give myself a break so even now when I slip ... I don't want to hurt anyone. And I cry when I hurt people unintentionally.

Q How do you react when one of your songs is played on the radio?

A If I hear one of my old songs like Not Gon' Cry or My Life — the My Life album just always makes me stop and just cry, like just bawl. So call me a crybaby, whatever. I'm a woman, too, so sometimes it's just that time.

Q Is it hard to perform those emotional songs when, at this point, you're in a different place?

A For me performing Not Gon' Cry and I'm Goin' Down and My Life — it's like therapy again. I just love the way it makes me feel at the moment and get it out of my system, you know. Those are hurtful places and sometimes you got to revisit for the sake of other people.

Q How would you compare today's R&B music with the '90s music?

A Can I say '80s, too? There is no comparison because the music in the '90s and the '80s was just like, music. You had Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis who were on the radio. Michael Jackson and Quincy Jones everywhere, all over the place. Anita Baker, just so many amazing people. ... I'm not saying the music isn't beautiful now. It's just such a ... it's limited

Q How do you think your fashion style has evolved?

A I mean I've had some disasters, some trials, some errors, some disastrous hair moments and clothing moments, but that's due to the insecurity in me and not knowing what works for me.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cameron appeals to Chinese film industry

MOVIES Hollywood director James Cameron urged China to open its doors to more foreign films, arguing it would boost the local cinema industry after the WTO ruled Beijing was illegally restricting movie and other media imports.

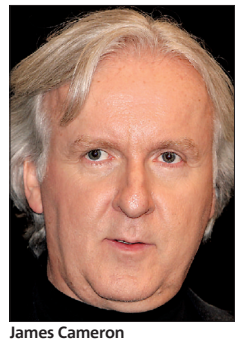
In Beijing to promote his latest sci-fi extravaganza, Avatar, Cameron said Wednesday that China's breakneck economic growth meant it no longer needed measures to protect its film industry.

"China's economy is expanding very, very rapidly. And I think the feeling right now is that perhaps it doesn't need to be protecting itself quite as much," Cameron, the director of blockbusters that include Terminator 2: Judgment Day and Titanic, told reporters. "Chinese filmmakers are very strong ... they're highly respected."

The Chinese government protects local films by limiting the number of film imports on a revenue-sharing basis to 20 a year, a quota that effectively limits Hollywood blockbusters to 20 slots annually.

These and other restrictions have been a key complaint by Western countries, who say that China's rapid rise as a trade power has been in part aided by unfair policies that boost sales of Chinese goods abroad while limiting imports into its market.

"I think that by opening the doors in China to other filmmakers, it will raise the entire film industry in China," Cameron said. "It will get people more excited, there will be more seats, more cinemas, more excitement about the cinema-going experience, which will also raise the Chinese filmmakers' ability to play their films."



GETTY IMAGES FILE PHOTO

James Cameron

On Monday, a World Trade Organization panel upheld a ruling in a case brought by the U.S. government that China was obstructing trade by forcing foreign suppliers to distribute movies, music and books through state-owned companies.

China expressed disappointment at the decision but gave no immediate sign whether it could keep trying to defend the controls.

The WTO case focused on complaints by groups representing music labels such as EMI and Sony Music Entertainment, publishers including McGraw Hill and Simon&Schuster and Hollywood studios Warner Bros., Disney, Paramount, Universal and 20th Century Fox. The groups say the Chinese rules cost them tens of millions of dollars each year in lost business opportunities.

China's box office is booming, but still comparatively small compared to the U.S. market. Government statistics show that revenues surged from 920 million yuan in 2003 to 4.3 billion yuan ($630 million) in 2008 — compared to $9.8 billion in the U.S. last year.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Lewd messages land rapper conviction

COURTS A would-be rapper was convicted Tuesday of harassing Ashanti's mother with a flurry of dirty photos and lewd text messages about the Grammy Award-winning R&B star.

Devar Hurd shook his head as a Manhattan jury delivered its verdict after two days of deliberations, finding him guilty of stalking and aggravated harassment for messages the singer's mother called scary and disgusting.

Hurd, a sometime model and car salesman from Griffith, Indiana, said he thought the crude messages, photos of his genitals and a picture of the home where Ashanti's family lives were welcome.

The 31-year-old is being held without bail until his sentencing, set for Jan. 11. He faces up to two years in prison. His lawyer, Richard Verchick, left court without speaking to reporters and didn't immediately return a phone call afterward.

Ashanti's mother, Tina Douglas, told jurors she didn't know Hurd when he began calling her and leaving messages recounting bizarre and rambling sexual fantasies about the singer. Douglas manages her daughter's multiplatinum-selling career.

Douglas said she told Hurd to leave her alone but he went on to send dozens of revolting text messages and pictures.

"It was just disgusting and humiliating and extremely frightening," Douglas testified, adding that she pulled Ashanti out of a rehearsal of The Wiz after Hurd sent a message that mentioned seeing the singer's car outside the theatre.

Ashanti starred as Dorothy in an off-Broadway revival of the musical this summer.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Time for ice wine
Ice wine production is underway thanks to the recent drop in temperature. John and Anne Warner, the largest producers of Ice wine juice in Nova Scotia, have successfully harvested their grapes to sell them to several Annapolis Valley Vineyards. VALERIE MANSOUR/FOR METRO CANADA

Urban Foodie

●●●●● INSPIRED; ●●●● VERY GOOD; ●●● PALATABLE; ●● HO-HUM; ● NEVER AGAIN

Aleppo's fare tasty and affordable

VALERIE MANSOUR
halifaxfoodie@gmail.com

Aleppo Restaurant
6249 Quinpool Rd.
444-3030

Rating: ●●●½
Dinner & drinks for 2: $30

While my two friends and I wait for our order at Aleppo, the server brings complimentary lentil soup to our table. With the warmth of both the service and the lemony soup, we forget the sub-zero temperatures outside.

Aleppo is casual with good prices and generous servings. The Veggie Plate ($9.50) is a stunning array of Middle Eastern foods — two falafels with a yogurt sauce, rice and lentils mix, tabouli, chick pea salad, cabbage salad, a rolled grape leaf, hummus and roasted potatoes. Most everything is flavourful, especially the hummus.

Shawarma Mix ($10.95) features chunks of tender beef and chicken marinated in lemon, olive oil and garlic. It is served with a fresh green salad and a scoop of hummus.

On the web

- Get recipes and more great food content at metronews.ca/recipes

For different ethnic variety we try the spicy Mexican Chicken ($11.95), chunks of meat on a bed of rice with a green salad. It is also served, remarkably enough, with hummus.

Each dish comes with pita slices. We agree it's a lovely lunch; we have more trouble deciding who takes home the leftovers.



Veggie Plate ($9.50).



VALERIE MANSOUR PHOTOS

Shawarma Mix ($10.95).

Global Peasant blog online

- Travel along with Diane Thompson's culinary adventures in her Global Peasant blog.
- Check out metronews.ca/globalpeasant for a recipe of Brown Rice Salmon Sushi!



Dining out

CHRISTMAS DAY Seasons Bistro at Hotel Atlantica, 1980 Robie St. at Quinpool, hosts a Christmas Day Brunch from 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. and an evening Christmas Buffet 5:30-8:30. Call 423-1161 for reservations.

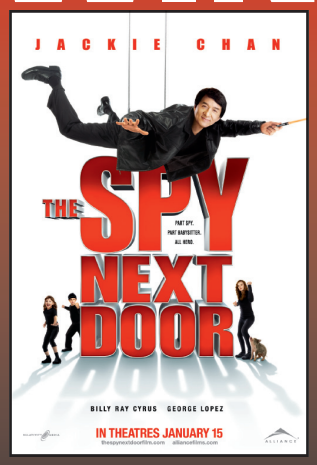
TURKEY AT ELEMENTS Elements restaurant at the Westin Hotel, 1181 Hollis St., offers a Christmas Day Brunch from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and a dinner buffet from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Call 496-7985 for reservations.

In brief

HALIFAX Farmers' Market will be closed Saturday December 26. The market will resume its regular hours 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, January 2 in the historic Keith's Brewery Building, 1496 Lower Water St.

SAVOUR Food & Wine Show: The always popular event featuring the best chefs in the province returns February 25, 2010, to the Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel. Visit savourfoodandwine.com or call 429-5343.

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No purchase necessary. Enter daily for more chances to win. Contest open to Canadian residents of legal age, excluding residents of Quebec. Contest closes January 3, 2010 at 11:59pm. Odds of winning depend on number of entries received. For full contest rules and details, visit www.metronews.ca.
metro

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Hudson may become a mother once again

Jennifer Hudson is pregnant with her second child just four months after giving birth to baby son David Jr., according to U.S. tabloid reports. She and her fiancé David Otunga discovered the happy news on Dec. 10, according to Star magazine. METRO WORLD NEWS

Celebrity Buzz

Winehouse theatre tantrum infuriates dad

OH AMY, AMY, AMY Mitch Winehouse is furious with Amy over her alleged theatre attack, female-first.co.uk reports.



The 58-year-old taxi driver is very unhappy with his daughter, who was hauled into Bethnal Green police station in London yesterday to be questioned about the incident at a pantomime — a traditional musical comedy production, typically performed around Christmas — in Milton Keynes last week.

A source said: "I've never seen Mitch this angry, he is seething. He can't believe Amy would act so stupidly."

The 26-year-old singer reportedly shocked theatregoers when she hurled abuse at the cast of Cinderella, allegedly kicked and punched the front of house manager, and spent more than half an hour of the first act yelling expletives.

Winehouse — who was thought to have been drinking — was eventually dragged out of the theatre by her security staff. Mitch blames Blake Fielder-Civil, the singer's ex-husband who she recently reconciled with, for her wild behaviour

A source told the Daily Star newspaper: "Her dad thinks her current behaviour is due to spending time with Blake again.

"After just one day in Blake's presence, Amy reverted back to her wild ways. Amy had really changed over the last few months and was getting her life back on track."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Summer wedding bells for Britney?

JUST REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME YOU PROPOSED, BRIT Britney Spears has been touring Beverly Hills jewelry stores shopping for engagement rings — only her boyfriend, Justin Trawick, doesn't know about it, according to In Touch Weekly. "Britney is ready to marry Jason," a source says "She wants to be with him 24/7." The source adds that Spears is hoping for a summer wedding.



METRO WORLD NEWS

Murphy's death raises drug speculations

THE PLOT THICKENS As the details of Brittany Murphy's are sorted out, some doctors are speculating that a combination of prescription drugs was behind the actress' heart attack earlier this week. "When you have a 32-year-old person dying suddenly, and especially a celebrity in Los Angeles, you can place your bet down that it's going prove to be a case of acute combined drug toxicity," Dr. Cyril Wecht tells the CBS Early Show. Meanwhile, Murphy's husband, Simon Monjack, was apparently left out of her will, as she wrote it before they were married, according to E! News. "She left everything to her mother," a source says.



METRO WORLD NEWS

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Jake mourns broken heart with guy pals

FAKE RELATIONSHIP BLUES Jake Gyllenhaal is licking his wounds after his split from Reese Witherspoon by reportedly vacationing with pals at the Post Ranch Inn in Big Sur, Calif., the very spot he planned to propose to his ex, according to Popeater.



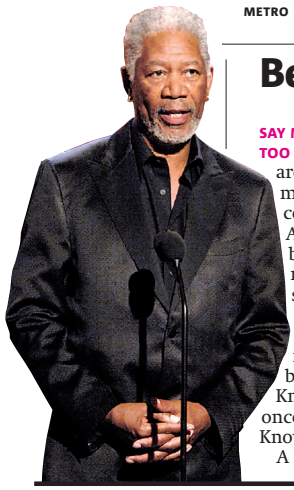
"It's so sad watching his friends try to cheer him up in the infinity pool when you know it was Reese that was supposed to be next to him wearing a diamond ring," a source says.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Freeman jet set

MILE HIGH CLUB Avid pilot Morgan Freeman bought himself a new plane for Christmas. The actor purchased an SJ30, said to be "the world's fastest, longest-range and highest-flying light jet," from Emivest, an investment firm in Dubai, according to Gulf News.

METRO WORLD NEWS



Beyonce and Jay-Z try on each other's names

SAY MY NAME... OK, AND HIS NAME TOO Beyonce Knowles and Jay-Z are to change their names, femalefirst.co.uk reports. The couple, who married in April 2008, are to take on both of their respective surnames in order to keep the singer's parental line from dying out.

Jay-Z — whose real name is Shawn Carter — will now be known as Shawn Knowles-Carter, while Beyonce is to become Beyonce Knowles-Carter.

A source told the Daily Star newspaper: "They want to keep Knowles because Beyonce's parents didn't have any sons and they're keen to keep the name going strong, especially if they don't produce any children themselves."

Earlier this week, the Knowles family suffered a blow when it was announced that Beyonce's parents Tina and Mathew would be divorcing after 29 years of marriage.

In October, rumours surfaced that Mathew may have been unfaithful, with a paternity suit filed by Alexandra Wright claiming he was the father of her unborn child — an allegation he has denied.

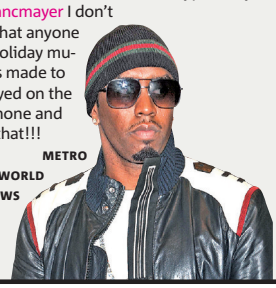


METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity tweets

Sean Combs keeps it clean, Stephen Fry is disconnecting for the holidays, Diablo Cody knows how to keep herself motivated, and John Mayer is very strict about Christmas songs.

- @iamdiddy Takin a bath. Its a nightly ritual! Its like getting baptized!!!
- @stephenfry Far away from London now. Christmas has started. No phone reception. Hesitant internet. Cut off from the world for a week. Makes me happy.
- @diablocody I listen to "Maniac" from Flashdance all the time. It makes me type really fast
- @johncmayer I don't care what anyone says, holiday music was made to be played on the saxophone and that's that!!!

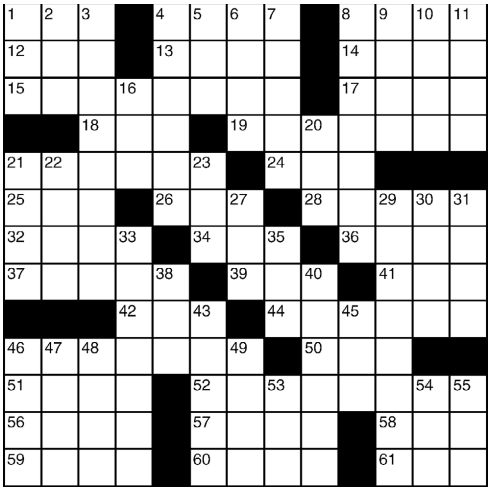


METRO WORLD NEWS

The Weather Network
TWN incorporates MSC data
Today Cloudy 1°/ -3°
Friday Variable 2° / -3°
Saturday Partly cloudy 2°/ 0°
TAKE THE WEATHER WITH YOU visit mobile.theweathernetwork.com

For more delicious Metro recipes, visit: **metronews.ca/food**

Take Five



ACROSS

1 Org. that caught Dillinger
4 Carpet type
8 Criticism
12 Bradstreet partner
13 Franc replacement
14 Lasso
15 Helped
17 Do as you're told
18 Greek mountain
19 Cunning
21 Buxom
24 Nevertheless
25 Illustrations
26 Conger, e.g.
28 Bottom point
32 On in years
34 Victory
36 — Strauss jeans
37 Groucho's "tattooed lady"
39 .Spacecraft compartment
41 Enervate
42 Energy
44 Kind of inspiration
46 Do anew
50 Petrol
51 Finished
52 Withstood
56 Catchall abbr.
57 Pace
58 Blunder
59 Otherwise
60 Small salamanders
61 Rotation duration

DOWN

1 Med. watchdog grp.
2 Clear the tables
3 Put one's foot down
4 Elmo's street
5 Shack
6 Belligerent Olympian
7 Devout
8 Direct, as an attack
9 Earring site
10 Tarzan's clique
11 Singer Alicia
16 Altar affirmative
20 Longing
21 Canaanite idol
22 Excessive revelry
23 Evergreen type
27 Back talk
29 Stopped
30 Terrible guy?
31 Mature
33 Tie breaker?
35 Affirmative action
38 Help
40 0 through 9
43 Combine
45 Anatomical duct
46 "When in —, ..."
47 Satan's specialty
48 Disarray
49 Canadian flag symbol
53 Perch
54 Historic time
55 Parched

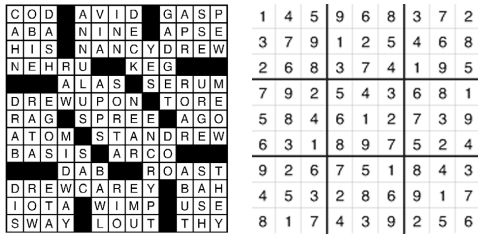
Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

9			6					
4		5		3	7			8
	3	2	1					
						5	3	
5		3				7		6
	2	9						
					4	6	2	
7			3	9		1		5
					5			4

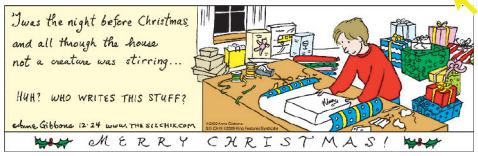
PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:



1	4	5	9	6	8	3	7	2
3	7	9	1	2	5	4	6	8
2	6	8	3	7	4	1	9	5
7	9	2	5	4	3	6	8	1
5	8	4	6	1	2	7	3	9
6	3	1	8	9	7	5	2	4
9	2	6	7	5	1	8	4	3
4	5	3	2	8	6	9	1	7
8	1	7	4	3	9	2	5	6

On the web

For more games and 60 additional daily cartoon strips, visit metronews.ca



Metro Recipe of the Day



Lemon Garlic Mussels

Submitted by:
Tammy Roy, St. Thomas, ON

INGREDIENTS:
-2 Tablespoon olive oil
-1 Cup vidalia onion diced
-1 chili pepper, sliced in half
-1 bay leaf
-8 Clove garlic, minced
-1 Tablespoon fresh parsley
-1 Tablespoon tarragon, rough chopped
-1 Tablespoon oregano, rough chopped
-1 Tablespoon thyme, rough chopped
-1 lemon, juice of
-1/2 Cup white wine
-2 1/2 Pound mussels, scrubbed and discard any that are not alive
-3 Tablespoon butter
-fresh herbs (to garnish)
-sliced lemon (to garnish)

METHOD:
1. Pour olive oil to cover bottom of a large pan.
2. Add onions, chili pepper and garlic - saute until translucent.
3. Add herbs, lemon and wine.
4. Add mussels - cover and steam for 5 minutes until all are opened.
5. Remove mussels to a large bowl.
6. Keeping the juice in the pan, whisk in the butter and pour over the mussels.
7. Garnish with herbs and lemon.

SERVES 4
PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 10 MINUTES

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Horoscopes by Sally Brompton sallybrompton.com

For Sally's expanded daily and weekend horoscopes, visit metronews.ca

ARIES ♈
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Just because it's the holiday season does not mean you should give up on your efforts to impress employers and other important people.

TAURUS ♉
APRIL 21-MAY 21
With Pluto power on your side there is nothing you cannot do or possess. The only danger is you might be a bit too imperious and turn off people.

GEMINI ♊
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Look in the mirror and be honest about what you see. Everyone has faults, but not everyone has the ability to recognize them.

CANCER ♋
JUNE 22-JULY 22
It may be the case that you are expected to do something today that goes against the grain, that compromises your values. Value your principles.

LEO ♌
JULY 23-AUG 23
The planets indicate you have been working too hard and need a rest, but you are unlikely to get one until you change your attitude.

VIRGO ♍
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Don't waste time worrying that what you are planning may not be possible, just get on and do it and before you know it you'll be flying.

LIBRA ♎
SEPT 23-OCT 23
You will have to deal with someone you would prefer to avoid, someone whose attitude you find difficult to take.

SCORPIO ♏
OCT 24-NOV 22
You will be extraordinarily generous today but make sure it is only your friends who benefit from your munificence.

SAGITTARIUS ♐
NOV 23-DEC 21
You don't have to ask anyone's permission to make the major changes that you desire. On the contrary, they'll work out if you seize the initiative

CAPRICORN ♑
DEC 22-JAN 20
Your confidence will go through the roof between now and the new year. You'll feel as if you could take on the world and win – and you can.

AQUARIUS ♒
JAN 21-FEB 18
It's okay to be secretive, especially if what you are planning has the potential to upset those you live or work with.

PISCES ♓
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Take the initiative in group activities and don't be afraid to tell others what they have been doing wrong.

TAKE A BREAK FROM WORK
Visit metronews.ca to watch metrotube of the day



This day in history

1955 – NORAD Tracks Santa for the first time in what will become an annual Christmas Eve tradition.
1968 – Apollo Program: The crew of Apollo 8 enters into orbit around the Moon, becoming the first humans to do so. They performed 10 lunar orbits and broadcast live TV pictures that became the famous Christmas Eve Broadcast, one of the most watched programs in history.
2003 – The Spanish police thwart an attempt by ETA to detonate 50 kg of explosives at 3:55 p.m. inside Madrid's busy Chamartín Station.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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- Rear Spoiler
- Automatic Headlamps
- Variable Intermittent Wipers
- Plus More!

SE model with Podium Edition Package shown.††



$12,915† CASH PURCHASE PRICE Freight not included

INCLUDES $2,850• CASH CREDIT

OR OWN IT! $90* BI-WEEKLY with $0 down payment and purchase financing for 84 months

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OR STEP UP TO THE 2010 PONTIAC G5 SE

CASH PURCHASE PRICE **$14,369†** Freight not included

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COMPARE, AND YOU WILL KNOW

	2010 PONTIAC G5 SE	2010 HYUNDAI ELANTRA L SEDAN	2010 HONDA CIVIC DX SEDAN
CASH PURCHASE PRICE	$14,369**	$15,849**	$15,990**
HEAD CURTAIN SIDE IMPACT AIRBAGS	Standard	Not Available	Standard
AIR CONDITIONING	Standard	Optional	Optional
16" ALUMINUM WHEELS	Standard	15" Steel	15" Steel
REMOTE KEYLESS ENTRY	Standard	Not Available	Not Available
POWER DOOR LOCKS	Standard	Standard	Not Available
HP / TORQUE	155/150	138/136	140/128
POWERTRAIN WARRANTY	5-year/160,000 km	5-year/100,000 km	5-year/100,000 km

With More than $2,000‡‡ in additional features than Hyundai or Honda

‡‡ Value of additional features based on dealer pricing. Vehicle comparison is based on 2010 G5 SE (2AL69/2AL37 1SA), 2010 Elantra L Sedan (D4T) and 2010 Civic DX Sedan (FA1529EX).** Vehicle specification and purchase price according to the information available on the manufacturer's website at time of printing.

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SE model shown.††

★★★★★ FIVE-STAR SAFETY RATING¥

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